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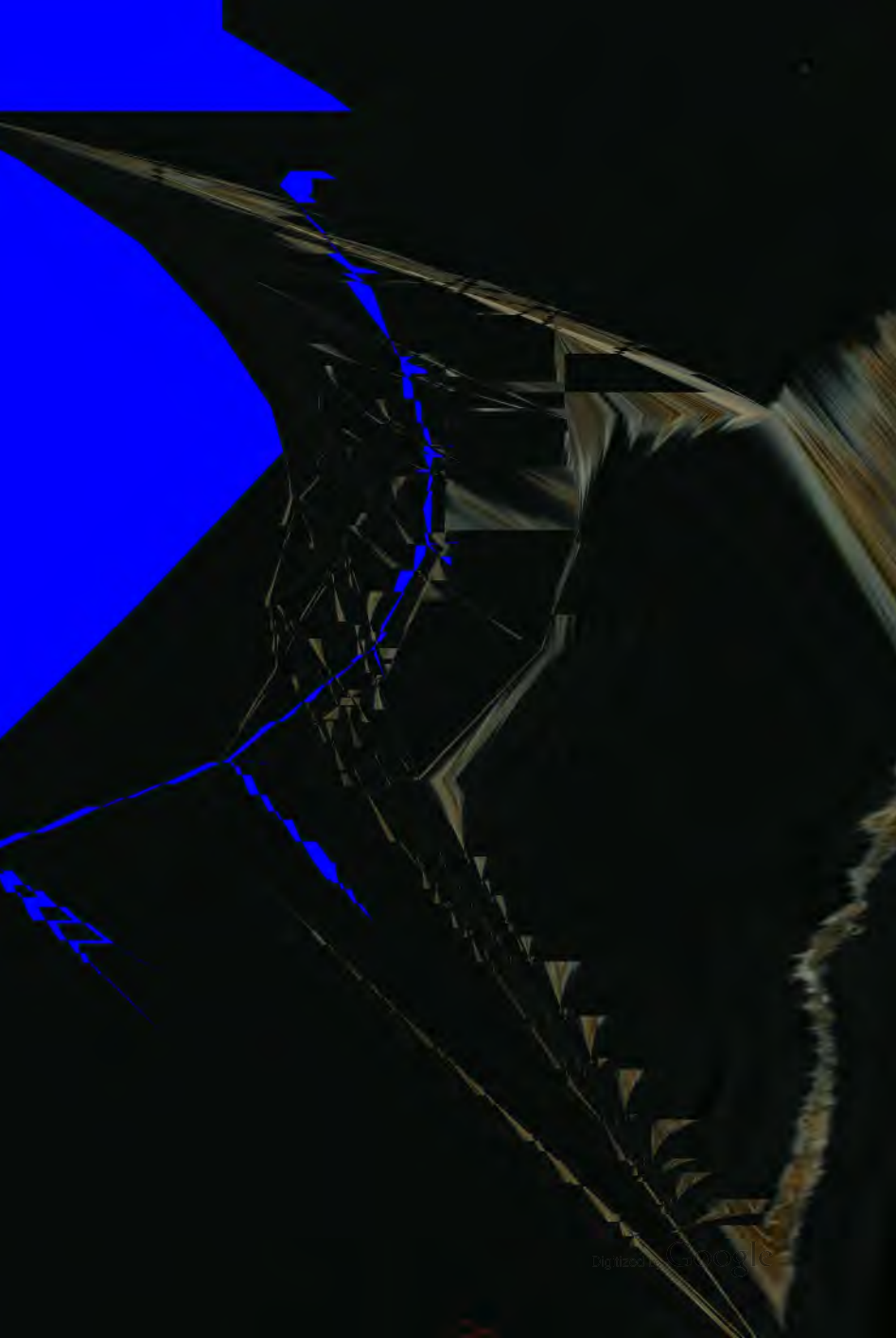
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AUSTRALIAN VIEWS
OF
ENGLAND.



AUSTRALIAN VIEWS

OF

ENGLAND.

*ELEVEN LETTERS WRITTEN IN THE
YEARS 1861 AND 1862.*

BY

HENRY PARKES,

LATE COLONIAL SECRETARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES.



London and Cambridge

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1869.

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PREFACE.

THE following Letters were written during a residence in England, in the years 1861 and 1862, and were published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the arrival of the monthly mails. After they were posted in London, they were never seen by the writer until a few days ago, when they were brought under his notice by a search for matter of quite a different character.

On reperusal, these Letters appear to contain views of English life and impressions of English notabilities, which, as the views and impressions of an Englishman on his return to his native country after an absence of twenty years, may not be without interest to the English reader.

The writer had opportunities of mixing with different classes of the British people, and of hearing opinions on passing events from opposite standpoints of observation. Some of the events then under discussion were of national magnitude, and will be the subjects of history. Some of the men glanced at were the leaders of the land, and will have a place assigned to them among the most illustrious.

With no claim to literary excellence, these Letters can possess no value unless it be derived from the explanation now offered of the circumstances under which they were written.

SYDNEY, *November*, 1868.

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LETTER I.

THE STATE OF POLITICAL FEELING—ENGLISH OPINIONS OF AMERICA.

THE state of political feeling in England at the present time is very peculiar, and scarcely admits of definite terms of description. It is not surprising that we hear people talk of a Conservative reaction, for certainly there exists a widespread distrust of extreme Liberalism, and a disposition, more or less manifest among all classes of society, to rest satisfied with the existing order of things. The civil discord in America, to an extent unjust to the Americans, has repelled and partly terrified the public mind; and anything that was felt to savour of American democracy would, I verily believe, be ill received in any great gathering of the people. The other day I heard a popular lecturer, Mr. George Dawson, discoursing to an audience of at least a thousand persons on the

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American troubles, and he indulged in some sharp ridicule of universal suffrage, which was received with loud cheers and merriment. The same indifference to what would have elicited a tempest of cheering from any meeting a few years ago was manifested a night or two back at a great meeting assembled in the Birmingham Town Hall to hear an address from one of your Colonial Commissioners, Mr. Parkes. I suppose Mr. Parkes considered it part of his duty to describe the political institutions of the colony, and, though his address was well received, and frequently applauded, when he explained that the Legislative Assembly was elected by manhood suffrage and the ballot, not a single cheer was heard. Mr. Parkes was addressing at least 5000 people, chiefly Birmingham artisans, who, twenty-two years ago, waged civil war for the five points of the People's Charter. These are incidents that have latterly come within my own knowledge, and, just as feathers indicate the direction of the wind, they will serve to shew the current of public feeling. I do not, however, think that the people at large have grown enamoured of the Conservatives as a party, though very probably, if any concurrence

of circumstances were to lead to Lord Derby's elevation to power just now, there would be a much more general disposition to tolerate them in office than has ever been felt before. The feeling that exists appears to be very little guided by definite principles of any kind, and a public man of amiable personal character, who frankly mingles with the people, will be a popular favourite, as Lord Stanley is, without reference to his political views and opinions. The fact is, that the people are beginning to look with suspicion upon political professions, while many of the representatives of the old territorial families have contrived to make themselves popular among all classes by their acts of consideration and their general conduct. Possibly experience has taught many that political agitation but very inadequately supplies the daily wants of a family, and administers but little to the enjoyment of life. Cheap railway travelling has probably been a powerful agent in moderating political passion, as well as in removing local prejudice; and I dare venture to say that a picnic in Stoneleigh Park would be a most dangerous competitor to a Reform meeting in Birmingham. The singular position which the eloquent member

for Birmingham himself occupies, affords the most forcible illustration of all of the political scepticism that has grown up. By his wonderful power of oratory, John Bright can, at any time, collect an audience of thousands which he can work into a transitory enthusiasm; but there is no man, occupying the same space in the public mind, of whom you hear so many persons speaking slightly. This is particularly the case among the manufacturers; and in Manchester this great apostle of the Manchester School is really unpopular. Among all the political ovations of the recess, where the names of Russell, Palmerston, Carlisle, Stanley, Lytton, Pakington, and others have been the ascendant stars, it is remarkable that not one of the "men of the people" has been the object of public adulation. To my mind there is something of glaring injustice towards the men who have sprung from the people's own ranks, and of degrading fickleness of opinion in the people themselves, in this apparent neglect and mistrust of their old friends. But the fact is so. A fortnight ago I heard a Staffordshire manufacturer, at a private dinner-table, speaking of Cobden in the bitterest terms of reproach, and no one present

raised his voice in vindication of the free-trade leader. It is not Conservative reaction in the old party sense of the term, but the action of a shopocratic conservatism of modern growth, combined with a sprinkling of flunkeyism, and a larger leaven of political infidelity.

The Emigration Commissioners from New South Wales and Queensland are stirring up the people by their lavish praises of their respective colonies. Mr. Jordan lately addressed a large meeting in the city of Glasgow, which went off very successfully. Your commissioner, Mr. Dalley, has been agitating the Home counties, while Mr. Parkes has been moving about in the manufacturing districts, and has had crowded meetings at Manchester, Birmingham, and other places. I understand Mr. Parkes and Mr. Dalley contemplate visiting Ireland in a short time.

I do not know what amount of success will attend the efforts of your commissioners, but I have met with persons who have determined to emigrate to New South Wales in consequence of their addresses, and some of these are men of character and means. If they had the power of granting free passages they might obtain any number of emigrants.

There is some talk of a Reform agitation among the Yorkshire and Lancashire politicians, and consultation meetings have been held in Manchester and Leeds, with the sanction, it is said, of several influential names, though the most important person that has appeared in person is Mr. George Wilson, the well-known chairman of the Anti-Corn Law League. The *Manchester Guardian* denounces any attempt to disturb the public mind by agitating for further reforms in the constitution, and harps away on the thorough failure of democratic institutions in Victoria and New South Wales: and yet the *Manchester Guardian* is a great Liberal journal. Since the appearance of the two fierce articles in the *Times*, I notice that every provincial journalist has his fling at parliamentary government in Australia. Will no one stand up to vindicate the character of the colonies?

The enemies of John Bright have been gratified within the last few days by the announcement that his carpet-weavers were out on strike at Rochdale, and that the firm were seeking to reduce wages below the rates paid in other establishments. But this has been authoritatively and flatly contradicted, and it is stated that no strike at all has

taken place, though the factory had been closed for some time while undergoing alterations, but now it is in full work, paying the highest wages, and refusing applications for employment. So much for the ingratitude of workmen to their popular champions, and so much for party scandals.

During the past month some unusually fine speeches have been delivered by parliamentary notabilities, of which Mr. Gladstone's on the progress of art, and Sir Bulwer Lytton's on the American war, have been the most splendidly conspicuous. Indeed, the speech of the great novelist at Hitchin has supplied the material for a hundred newspaper leaders in different parts of the country. The country squires have been prosing away in all directions till they have made the very atmosphere of England feel drowsy.

It is curious to note the ill-informed and ill-natured remarks on the civil war in America which are made among the trading classes. If you meet with a manufacturer or a travelling factor in a hotel or railway carriage, he is sure to amuse you with some clumsy and ignorant attempt to ridicule the Americans, and it always turns out that their greatest blunder and greatest crime consists in not

sending their cotton to England, and in not taking England's manufactures. Until of late I had lived under the impression that the Americans had a deal to answer for in cherishing a bad feeling towards England, which was entirely unjustified by the disposition of the English people towards them ; but a worse spirit than anything I have ever read of in America is constantly displaying itself among the factory squires and shopocrats of England, while the sympathies of the aristocracy are undisguisedly offered to the rebellious Southerners. And it is remarkable how little original thought appears to be expended on this fratricidal war. Liberal journalists and popular lecturers repeat each other without end ; but no one thinks it worth his while to investigate the causes of the quarrel with earnestness, and place the whole case before the public in the light which the history of the last five-and-twenty years might throw upon it.

LONDON, *October 25*, 1861.

LETTER II.

THE STATE OF POLITICAL FEELING—AUSTRALIAN
COLONISTS IN ENGLAND—THE FRENCH TREATY
—GOSSIP.

SOME of the newspapers have been circulating a rumour that Parliament will be dissolved soon after its meeting, which is fixed for an early day in February; and they have been amusing themselves with speculations as to the changes in the seats which will follow. There is not a shadow of reason for this rumour, nor is it intended to submit any motion that would try the strength of the two great parties in the House of Commons. In the country the Conservatives are cleverly widening the circle of their influence, I think, on the generally accepted condition that their game will be best played out by the contending sections of their opponents, if they themselves are only sufficiently self-restrained and prudent. There

are some public favourites in the Conservative ranks—men who are conspicuous for their thorough English qualities, and these men exercise an influence in favour of their party which is essentially personal and non-political. But, even in politics, many of the working classes have decided leanings to Conservatism, or rather to the men of Conservative reputation, for I doubt whether their preference is for Conservatism in the abstract. This feeling, it will be remembered, distinguished many of the Chartists of by-gone years, and even now we find Ernest Jones dedicating his poems to Sir Bulwer Lytton. The shopkeepers, for the most part, are "Liberals," and so are many of the commercial classes above them; but it is the voice of these "Liberals" which is loudest in its abuse of Mr. Bright. Their Liberalism extends little beyond their own order, and the secret of the working men's preference for the Conservatives is that the Conservatives really evince a more genuine feeling of fellowship for the working men, when they come in contact with them, than is to be found among the new families of opulence which have been admitted to political power by the Reform Act.

Theoretical Radicalism is beyond all doubt at a

low ebb just now in England. The case in favour of an extension of the franchise, as put in Mr. Bright's letter, has a logical force almost irresistible. Nevertheless, it is resisted with successful ridicule, and the recent Reform Conference at Leeds proves that little earnestness is felt on the subject even among the 5,000,000 unenfranchised men whose cause is so powerfully supported by Mr. Bright. The Conference sat on the 18th and 19th, and on the evening of the latter day, after Leeds had been stirred by the debates of the assembled delegates, a public meeting to set on foot an agitation in favour of Reform was held in the Victoria Hall, and at this meeting the attendance, estimated by the leaders of the movement, did not exceed 2000, though the hall will contain 5000 people. The proceedings at the Conference were barren and unanimated; the only warmth arose from differences of opinion carried almost to the length of quarrelling. Earl Russell, Earl de Grey, the Earl of Carlisle, Sir Charles Wood, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Bright, Mr. Roundell Palmer, Mr. Edward Miall, and other leading Liberals were invited, but every one of them found some reason or other for absenting himself from the Conference.

The reply sent by Mr. Miall, one of the most thoughtful and conscientious of the extreme Liberals, supplies a striking confirmation of the opinion I expressed in my letter by last mail of the demoralised state of political feeling in England. For this reason I copy the letter as it appears in the papers.

“THE FIRS, UPPER NORWOOD,
“November 16, 1861.

“SIR,

“I am afraid I shall have to plead guilty to the charge of paying but too little attention to the dates fixed upon for the Reform Conference at Leeds. I saw by your note of invitation that it was to be held ‘next week,’ but knowing that it would be impossible for me to be present, I did not notice the details announced in the programme on which that note was written, until too late for my reply to reach you on the 18th. I beg most heartily to apologise for this mishap.

“I need hardly assure you of my earnest wishes that the Conference may prove the means of reawakening a Reform feeling in the popular mind. Till we have an infusion of fresh blood into the constituent body, no great good can be expected from Parliament. But I freely confess my conviction that until the people of the country are un-Palmerstonised, I do not anticipate there will be any great earnestness on the question, so far as they are concerned. When a whole country gives itself up to ‘a strong delusion,’ under the influence of which they can almost complacently throw away millions sterling upon armaments of all kinds, not excepting fortifications, at the mere bidding of a popular, because plucky, Premier, I am sometimes tempted to suspect that even a large Parliamentary Reform will hardly go deep enough to cure the evil, and that the first and most important change required is a change in the

sentiments, tastes, and, if I may say, tone of the people. Since the outburst of the Russian war, political demoralisation has been both wider in its sweep and more rapid in its action, than in any like period of our modern history, and the principles which once had our reverence we now see daily treated with scorn without any deep feeling of indignation. The present is an interval of almost universal political scepticism—all our old faiths have been laughed, or jockeyed, or ridiculed out of us—and accordingly we are in earnest about nothing. No doubt the mood is but a transient one—trouble will soon alter it—but whilst it lasts, I fear that no great and lasting success can be achieved.

“Believing this, however, I feel satisfied that you do right in bringing together the friends of Reform, and giving them the opportunity of conferring with each other. It will assist to keep the fire alive to better times, and, if it does not immediately succeed, will contribute important materials towards some future, and, I would fain believe, not very distant success. I am truly sorry that I cannot possibly arrange to be with you.

“I have the honor to be, Sir,

“Yours very respectfully,

“EDW. MIALL.”

Some of the political demonstrations in England are surprising enough not only in their nature, but in the form they assume. At Kidderminster, on the 1st of the month, the municipal elections were made a trial of strength between the Conservatives and Liberals, and all the vacancies were filled by the Conservative candidates, who kept the lead in the polling throughout the day. The town was in quite a fever of excitement, and the ragged

burgesses threw up their caps in desperate style for their Conservative victory.

The important constituency of South Lancashire was carried a short time ago by a Conservative, after a tremendous struggle, in which Mr. Bright himself personally engaged on the Liberal side; and the representation of Plymouth has been run very hard by a Conservative. Of the seats now vacant, Carlisle, Finsbury, and East Worcestershire will be filled by Liberals, though the struggle at Carlisle will be severe; but there is no candidate of mark in the field. The Worcestershire Conservatives had a meeting the other day to consider the expediency of bringing forward a man to supply the place of Mr. Foley; but they decided in favour of the "better part of valour," and Mr. Foley Vernon, who is a very safe kind of Liberal, is to be allowed to "walk the course." Mr. Samuel Morley has declined an invitation to present himself for Finsbury, and the only candidate at present is Mr. Campbell Sleight, who is best known as the author of "A Handy Book on Criminal Law." Mr. Torrens M'Cullagh, author of several politico-economical works, and one of the political writers in the *Daily News*, has also been mentioned, but

I understand he will not offer himself. The name of Mr. Charles Dickens was mentioned at a meeting of the electors—I suppose by some admirer of *Pickwick*—but he writes to say that he would not consent to stand for “that place or any other under the sun.” The latest rumour is that a requisition is in course of signature to Mr. Lusk, the Scotch provision dealer, and late Sheriff of London—a gentleman about as opposite in character to the late Thomas Slingsby Duncombe as could be well imagined. Mr. Potter, at Carlisle, has the weight of Mr. Cobden’s name in his favour, but the English people all over the world fret at the interference of prominent men in elections as a species of incipient dictation, and Mr. Cobden’s advocacy will not be regarded in an exceptional light, though he undoubtedly brings with him a greater weight of leadership than any other independent Liberal in Parliament. On the whole, I think the Government will be slight losers by the changes during the recess.

A question of vast moment, but of no distinctive shape, must often intrude from the mists of the future upon the minds of political thinkers—Who is to govern England half-a-dozen years hence?

The old statesmen are dying off. The next six years will make terrible havoc with the names that have been most familiar to the ears of the last two generations. As they descend into the valley of shadows, where are the men of calm strength and vigour coming up the other side of the hill, bearing the standard of either party? If the hand of death is withheld from their heads, I dare prophesy a combination of Cobden, Gladstone, and Stanley. The present state of public feeling is not natural to England; its levity and capriciousness will pass away and give place to a more healthy fruition of the general growing intelligence. The name of Cobden will yet be the most honoured in the land. No man has more of that inspiring simplicity of manner, and that calm, almost spiritual earnestness of purpose, which, combined with comprehensive thought and the patient power of labour, are sure to gain the moral mastery. In his case these qualities illuminate enduring public services, and a reputation already historical.

Lord Palmerston's impulsive Irish Secretary—who the newspapers say was sent over to the Emeralders as one of the Premier's practical jokes—has been spreading wildfire through that portion

of her Majesty's dominions, and causing very different kinds of sensation in England. If your readers want to refresh themselves with something novel, just let them read Sir Robert Peel's oration at Belfast.

The Liverpool Financial Reform Association has been trying to open a crusade against the present system of taxation. But the people will not be moved, except by Jenny Lind. Mr. Robertson Gladstone and his friends have experimented by engaging the services of a smart literary lecturer, Mr. Washington Wilks, who has addressed meetings in some of the large towns, with the rooms only half filled. Mr. Wilks is instructed to abolish the Custom Houses altogether, and he illustrated the blessings of cheap tea by quoting the case of Australia. There, he said, tea was untaxed, and "the shepherds on the Australian prairies drank it by the bucketful."

The working of free institutions in Australia has been a fruitful subject with the English press, from the *Times* downwards, and it is amusing to read the ignorant and self-conceited comments of some of the country papers. The articles in the *Times* appear to me reckless enough, and their

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argument, such as it is, certainly proceeds for the most part on false premises. But to hear the purblind country journalist squeaking out his horror at the unhappy collision between the European gold-diggers and the Chinese, quite unconscious of the brutal outrages between gamekeepers and poachers which disfigure his own columns every morning, excites laughter where one might otherwise be inclined to weep.

There is little to notice in reference to Australians now in England. I sometimes hear of the movement of your Emigration lecturers. Mr. Dalley, in the early part of this month, was at Southampton and at Portsmouth, and at both places had good audiences. But the poor people of England understand the word "emigration" to mean a "free passage" to some country better than their own, and Mr. Dalley and Mr. Parkes will have some difficulty in making them understand it in any other sense. An old Sidney resident, Mr. Robert Campbell, of Bligh-street, who a short time ago purchased an estate of some 8000 acres on the borders of Berkshire, and settled down to the regular life of an English country gentleman, was a fortnight ago chosen High Sheriff of the

county. Mr. Campbell, I am told, is carrying on very extensive drainage and other improvements of his estate, and has embarked rather extensively in English sheep-farming.

Trade in England is very unevenly affected by what is going on in other parts of the world. The Birmingham gun trade, for instance, is overdone with orders, many of the factories working night and day. Yorkshire manufactories, too, especially the stuff trade of Bradford, are feeling the benefit of the French tariff. On all sides activity shews itself; Titus Salt is making a magnificent fortune with his alpacas and mohairs for the French market. He ought to erect a statue in honour of Mr. Cobden. At Coventry, the poor ribbon-weavers are down at starvation point; and in Lancashire, it is to be feared, many will perish of hunger during the winter. What a perversity in the management of the world that their labour cannot be transferred to where it is so much wanted—Australia!

The literary world of London is overcrowded with ephemeral efforts. The whirl of cheap publications, the prolific offspring of Mr. Milner Gibson's Act, is perfectly stunning, their very names be-

wildering the memory. The Christmas books preparing are to eclipse in beauty all previous works of the kind.

The third and fourth volumes of Frederick the Great, completing Mr. Carlyle's great work, are passing through the press, and will be published early next summer. Robert Browning has returned to England, after a residence of more than fifteen years in Italy, where he remained for the health of the gifted creature who has lately passed away to another world. The poetical remains of Mrs. Browning will shortly be published under his superintendence. The poet-laureate is in London secretly consulting his physicians. For some time past Mr. Tennyson has been the most courted man in England, the object of special interest in every brilliant gathering where the lion could by any ingenious device be caught; and now that he is seriously ill, his friends are prohibited from letting it be known that he is in town.

Mr. William Westgarth, who was the last member for Melbourne in the Sidney Legislature, has published a book on the Rise and Progress of Australia, which aspires to be a more comprehensive work than previous publications on the

Australian colonies. A book on the colony of Victoria, I am told, will shortly appear from the pen of a gentleman for some years connected with the Melbourne press.

LONDON, *Nov.* 25, 1861.

LETTER III.

THE WAR OF KINDRED — THE NATIONAL MOURNING.

THIS will be a solemn Christmas-eve in England. Thousands of artisan families will meet it with the bitter prospect of want and starvation blanching their cheeks; and very many of their employers will hardly be able to turn their gaze from the brink of ruin on which they stand to the objects of grief and apprehension which weigh down the public mind. Breaking through the commercial gloom, every hour and from every quarter have come of late the discordant notes of warlike preparation, and the heavy tolling of the bell of death. Never, perhaps, was the nation in a more sorrowful mood, and never had it deeper cause for sorrow.

Let us reason as we will, we cannot free ourselves from the painful consciousness that we are

about to plunge into a fratricidal war—about to vindicate our honour in the shadow of the blood-red banners of slavery. Bold and boastful as is the language of the London Press, it is easy to see that there is a tremour in the writer's hand. Every second morning a tone of misgiving seems to soften the reckless bravery even of the *Times*. It will not do; people cannot satisfy their consciences, though goaded on by the sense of insult, that it is a high Christian thing to burden the nation with debt, and to spill the nation's blood on the wrong side of the American civil broils. At first the sense of wrong sent every man's hand to the sword-hilt. But the hard logic of consequences has tempered men's minds wonderfully during the last three weeks. Those who are little affected by feelings of brotherhood or sympathy with freedom, see reason to pause in the loss of trade and the increase of taxation, and I doubt much whether, if war be declared, it will long remain a popular war.

We have lately lived in such a Babel of international law—such a dinning conflict of opinions from publicists, journalists, and Parliamentarians, that the ground of quarrel can only be reached

through "confusion worse confounded." It is agreed, however, that the Northern republic is in the wrong. I do not think any voice in Europe, entitled to consideration, has denied that. In fact, the French, as the greatest maritime power in Europe next to England, is equally interested with England in the just settlement of the question raised by the affair of the Trent, and there is every reason to suppose that the Imperial Government will view their interests in this light. But is there no way to redress but a bloody and protracted war?

London, and the great seats of population throughout the provinces, were suddenly agitated on the 27th of November, by the telegraphed information that Messrs. Slidell and Mason, the Secessionist Commissioners to Europe, had been forcibly taken out of the English mail steamer Trent, while on her passage from Havannah to St. Thomas, by a Federal ship of war. The Trent left Havannah on the 7th of November, with the commissioners on board as passengers; on the following day she was stopped in the Bahama Channel by the United States frigate San Jacinto, under the command of Commodore Wilkes, your

old scientific friend who surprised the good citizens of Sydney some eighteen years ago by anchoring his ships in the Cove one summer morning before they were up or knew anything about his visit. The *San Jacinto* brought the *Trent* to by firing a shotted gun across her bows, and a lieutenant with a company of armed marines boarded the mail steamer, and seized the commissioners and carried them away prisoners, under the protests of the English commander and the naval agent in charge of her Majesty's mails. The news was brought to Southampton by the steamer *Plata*, which vessel ought to have brought the commissioners, according to their arrangements at Havannah.

A meeting of the British Cabinet was held immediately, and it became known that the law officers of the Crown were in frequent communication with Ministers. On the third day from the receipt of the intelligence, a Privy Council, attended by the Queen, was held at Windsor, and on the evening of the same day a Queen's messenger left London with a despatch for Lord Lyons. This rapid succession of movements told sufficient to the nation. Tory members of Parliament, more loudly than Ministerialists, expressed their satis-

faction that the honour of the country was in the hands of Lord Palmerston. The friends of peace looked to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Milner Gibson, and refused to believe that an *ultimatum* was winging its way across the Atlantic. Men of money and of commerce began to count the cost; more than £100,000,000 of British capital was sunk in American stocks, and at least £50,000,000 was employed in the trade between the two countries. Were we prepared to have it wiped out by a bloody sponge? Blusterers were for chastising the Yankees at all hazards. Lancashire cried, in subdued groans, "Open the Southern ports!" Yorkshire and Staffordshire wailed aloud, "Heaven help us, if you close the markets of the North!" The confusion and anxiety spread wider and deeper as time rolls on. But amidst it all there is a large class of thoughtful public-spirited Englishmen, whose anxiety arises from a full knowledge of the terrible cost of war, and a feeling of national pride that would preserve the honour of their country at any cost. They see nothing of the attempt, for the first time in the history of the world, to create a new empire avowedly on the foundation of slavery. They refuse to consider

what direction the new quarrel may give to the old. They cannot calculate consequences. In this matter they only know, with a wringing sense of shame, that their country's flag has not been a protection to those who believed themselves secure where it waved. Only atonement for the outrage can relieve them from the duty of vindication.

A publication, which often sends a voice of heroic poetry ringing through its playful sallies of wit, has finely expressed this feeling of the nation :

"All war she knows drags horror in its train,
Whate'er the foes, the cause for which they stand ;
But worst of all the war that leaves the stain
Of brother's blood upon a brother's hand.

The war that brings two mighty Powers in shock,
Powers, 'tween whom fair commerce shared her crown :
By kinship knit, and interest's golden lock,
One blood, one speech, one past of old renown.

All this she feels, and, therefore, sad of cheer,
She waits an answer from across the sea :
Yet hath her sadness no alloy of fear,
No thought to count the cost, what it may be.

Dishonour hath no equipoise in gold,
No equipoise in blood, in loss, in pain :
Till they whom force has ta'en from 'neath the fold
Of her proud flag, stand 'neath its fold again.

Four or five days more, and the "answer from across the sea" will reach the widowed Queen of England in her secluded sorrow, and there is scarcely room for hope that her first act in her widowhood will not be to sign a message which will make thousands of her countrywomen widows. Yet, if men reasoned honestly on their proper part in these momentous transactions of life and death, we might still hope for the union of honour and peace. Contraband of war in no sense could the Southern Commissioners be. If an issue of international law be raised, all authorities appear to agree, and the agreement is in accord with the natural reason of the thing, that nothing carried by a neutral ship, between one neutral port and another, can be deemed "contraband of war." Such precisely was the case of the Trent and her passengers. On the other hand, if Messrs. Slidell and Mason are pursued as rebels, they cannot be followed upon English soil without violating the right of asylum, and the deck of an English ship is part of the soil in national law. All legal arguments and State doctrines bring us back to these two issues, and in either case the verdict of civilised nations must be against America.

It is comforting, whatever may betide, to feel that right is undeniably on our side in this quarrel. But for that very reason we can afford to be calm, and to forbear so long as there is hope of a peaceable adjustment. It will concert most with the magnanimity of a great nation to be slow to draw the sword against one of kindred origin, however she may err, at the moment when the sword of civil war is already pointed at her breast. Our pride might well be enlisted here, even if we were insensible to the interests of freedom and the claims of humanity. Can it be that the Cabinet of Washington will leave no way open from an appeal to arms?

The death of the Prince Consort has come upon the nation with a singular concurrence of solemn circumstances. The suddenness of the blow, in the midst of health and happiness, was sufficiently appalling; but he who had made it the business of his English life to understand the English nation has been snatched away at the approach of the gravest peril the nation has had to meet in his time, and just when the prejudices against his foreign birth were fading utterly away, and his character, but slowly recognised in its fine

force and manly simplicity, was winning to himself the love and pride of the English people. It has been said that England has lost in Prince Albert the most valuable life in all the gifted ranks of her widespread population. Surely that cannot be the true estimate of the nation's loss. But she has lost the one man of rare judgment, rare sagacity, and rare humanity, whose place can never be supplied. She has lost him in the prime of life, in the summer of his splendid intellect, before his calm spirit of practical wisdom had reached its maturity.

"The hope of unaccomplished years
Was large and lucid round his brow."

Prince Albert died an hour before midnight, on the 14th of this month, after an illness which had lengthened through eighteen days from the first attack, but which had not been regarded with apprehension until the last forty-eight hours, even by those immediately around the Royal household. The following day being the Sabbath, when the ordinary means of communication were for the most part closed, the sad intelligence was some time before it impressed its certainty upon the

minds of the inhabitants of London. Men tried to console their minds with lingering doubts in spite of the toll of the great bell of St. Paul's. Could it possibly be that the death-bell was tolling for that noble Prince, who had appeared amongst them so lately the picture of health and vigorous life, and whose image had never been associated with death in the thoughts of the most mournful? But the sorrowful truth gradually spread in every home and every heart. Throughout the provinces people generally became aware of the nation's loss as they assembled at the house of God, and from one end of England to the other the effect was one of universal visible grief, as if death had come to the doors of every family in the land. The signs of mourning have continued everywhere until to-day, when the body of the Prince has been consigned to the grave. Never in English history has any death been so visibly felt by all ranks of the English people. The working classes, for the improvement of whose social condition Prince Albert laboured so earnestly, so wisely, so effectually, have assembled in thousands and sung together the Rev. Newman Hall's beautiful adaptation of the National Anthem.

To-day I heard seven thousand people of all social degrees mingling their voices in this strain of national sorrow and supplication. In every city and town of England to-day the ordinary pursuits of life have been suspended. But it is not by closed shutters and doors, by habiliments of mourning, by the tolling of Church bells, and by drooping flags wreathed with crape, that the national sorrow is most touchingly expressed. You see it everywhere in the grief-burdened faces of the people. You see it in the utter absence of any expression or sign inconsistent with this sense of loss. Deeply, and with a true love, do the people mourn for the Consort of their beloved Queen.

And she, poor Royal Lady! how does her woman's heart bear up in this great and sudden trial? "Many poor women have had to bear this trial," was the simple outburst of Victoria's grief and resignation. The people are told that their Queen is calm. Nothing more is known from the seclusion of her island-home.

Unhappily this is a season of deep-seated misery at the hearths of many of her people. In the neighbourhood of Manchester alone it is supposed

that at least 60,000 hands are out of work. In London strenuous efforts are being made to relieve the widespread destitution. In Yorkshire and Staffordshire short time and low wages are doing their work, and empty houses and haggard faces tell the doleful story. If severe weather set in, the suffering from poverty will be terrible.

In the event of war, Parliament will probably meet on the 14th of January, and we may expect the debates to be fierce and stormy. The friends of peace will muster with a strong array of talent, but the Government will have an overwhelming support in the course they have taken, and money and men will be supplied with a lavish hand. It is to be feared that the progress of hostilities will soon engender a bitter and relentless feeling of antagonism on both sides in the quarrel.

In considering the eventualities of the war, so far as I have been able to learn, little thought has been bestowed upon the Australian colonies. It is very possible, I think, that your danger is not fully foreseen by the English authorities. You may depend upon it, however, that if England and America plunge into a great naval war, American privateering will exceed everything of

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the kind known of other countries in former times. There are thousands of men, who sail under the stripes and stars, who possess the adventurous spirit and desperate courage which fit the privateer for his peculiar kind of aggressive operations in a naval war. You had better lose no time in preparing for your own defence. Do not lull yourselves into a false sense of security by depending too much upon the naval superiority of England. American privateers will be recruited from sources independent of the supplies to the Federal fleet. But the Northern States, under the pressure of the new crisis, will soon have a powerful fleet afloat. The boasts of some American writers may not be fulfilled; she may not have 100,000 sailors and 10,000 guns afloat in six months. But it is a delusion to suppose that the Washington Government has exhausted its resources or will be unable to present a defiant front in the impending conflict. Sydney and the surrounding districts ought to muster 5000 volunteers.

LONDON, *Dec. 24, 1868.*

LETTER IV.

THE AMERICAN WAR—MESSRS. MASON AND
SLIDELL—PRINCE ALBERT—THE WORKING
CLASSES—EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN.

I CAN imagine with what anxiety the Australian colonists will have waited for the intelligence by the present mail, and what a healthful feeling of relief will glow in every breast when the first tidings fall upon their ears. Not that the simple apprehension of the cost of war, nor any lower sense of fear, will have occupied the minds of Englishmen in the remote dependencies of the empire any more than the minds of Englishmen at home. But there were so many conflicting interests to be torn and trampled in the threatened strife between England and America, and so much danger of being precipitated upon ground foreign to all the national sympathies—so much that, while it damped all chivalry of spirit, would

madden the worst passions of war—that the suspense in which the English people passed from the old to the new year was perfectly awful. The great emotion of the popular mind cannot be gathered from the jarring utterances of the public Press. In every man's face there were the consanguineous signs of uneasiness and a confused grief, and it seemed as if the millions were all looking with the same sorrowful sternness of purpose towards the West. To slightly vary the immortal words of Campbell—

“The nation held its breath
For a time!”

This fearful gloom is passed away, but the public mind is still troubled and restless. It is enough to confound the strongest mind to see the all-reaching strife of blood which is devastating the proud republic of North America, and pronounce where it will end. Let sectional politicians say what they may, the welfare of England is so closely interwoven with the peaceful progress of America, that they cannot be separated without doing violence to the laws of nature. All men whose English feeling rises above their political

leanings, though from very different points of view, see or feel this. The pacific settlement of the perilous difference arising out of the Trent exploit has given a tone to this feeling of kindred anxiety more generous towards the North, and apprehensions of further international embarrassments spring chiefly from the force of friendly regard. Beyond all doubt, sympathy with the Federal cause is fresher and more general in England just now than for months past.

The incidents of the seizure of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, and the terms of the demand and surrender of the prisoners, as disclosed in the correspondence between the two Governments, would admit of a wide debate. But one thing is proved, to the discomfiture of the enemies of popular government, that the Executive authority at Washington can decide grave matters by the dictates of his own judgment, unterrified by "mob power." In due course, Messrs. Mason and Slidell were given up to Lord Lyons, and placed again under the British flag, on board the war steamer *Rinaldo*. Strange to say, there is a strong probability that while I write the rescued captives, who have created so great a sensation in the

world, are in eternity. As yet, we have no intelligence of their arrival at Halifax, and it is to be feared that the Rinaldo was lost in a tremendous gale, in which it is supposed she must have been caught the first night she was at sea. Some of the New York papers are almost jubilant over the supposed destruction of these conspicuous traitors.

If Mason and Slidell are saved from the devouring sea, they will have a cold reception in England. The *Times* has taken the lead, in a terrible strain of denunciation, in warning the people to shun their presence. With the fate of Haynau before their eyes, they had better not be tempted to look in at Barclay and Perkins' brewery. If they are not answerable for flogging patriotic ladies, it is said that their fingers have been largely concerned in whipping poor, defenceless slaves. English draymen have as little fancy for the latter performance as for the former.

Now that the death of Prince Albert is a fact in history, all classes of the people have reverently set their hands to the work of commemorating his worth. As no prince was ever so universally and deeply mourned, so will the memory of none

be monumentally recorded in prouder words of love and admiration. England is becoming a land of statues. It is beautiful to see in the bosom, as it were, of every city and town, the people's statue of the great minister who gave them untaxed bread, with the one word "Peel," in a taste so accordant with the unpretending respect of the poor, inscribed below. A few years hence every English child will have some local statue of Albert the Good, benignly crowning its earliest associations.

The services of Prince Albert were of a kind which the intelligent mechanics of England thoroughly appreciate. Those only who have seen the stalwart workman, with a delicate sensibility mantling his toil-stained face, when men of a condition superior to his own manifest an intelligent interest in his handiwork, will be able to comprehend the fulness of the English artisan's affection for a Prince who was not only acquainted with every branch of manufacturing art, but was himself the successful improver of several of the most beautiful productions of the English workshop. There is a very kingliness in the true type of the English mechanic. What can be more

kingly than a sense of sovereignty over material nature? And this sense of innate power—the cunning of his own right hand—when subordinated to a higher sense of moral duty, gives to him a nobleness of life which many in the favoured walks of society can never approach. Thousands of such men—the flower of modern England—are scattered through England's manufactories; and these men, and not the starred and titled, are the chief mourners of the departed Prince.

What strikes one in England as the most remarkable change in the moral aspect of society is the large amount of self-directed effort on the part of the working classes to improve their own condition. We see this on all hands, in temperance societies, in freehold-land societies, in penny banks, in co-operative shops, in workmen's libraries. Some of the finest public buildings in old historical towns are halls owned and managed chiefly by working men. In nearly every town of consequence the working classes have their co-operative provision store. And I have heard a plain mechanic, in a meeting of 6000 people, speak more common sense in ten minutes than all the other speakers put together; and, what was better,

carry the meeting with him by the sheer force of his common sense. All this apart from speculative politics, and with a close bearing on the practical realities of life. It is difficult now-a-days to stir the workmen of English towns by a party cry, but their attention is easily caught by a new invention, or a plan for their moral elevation. They have got a taste for public parks, cheap concerts, and Fine Arts exhibitions; and he must be a gifted charmer on public wrongs who could win their ears from Jenny Lind.

Not the least important of the efforts for social change is the movement, now rather prominent in England, for extending the field of employment for respectable women. A number of clever young ladies, whom it is simply coarse abuse to be always designating the "strong-minded," have taken the lead in this work with a noble earnestness. In London and Edinburgh they have established printing-offices where the compositors are all young girls. The ladies at the head of this decisive movement in London are Miss Emily Faithful, Miss Bessie Raynor Parkes, and Miss Maria S. Rye. The former presides over a well-organised printing-office at No. 9, Great Coram-

street, under the business style of "Emily Faithful and Company;" and she has about twenty lady compositors hard at work. The *Victoria Regia*, copies of which have no doubt reached Sydney, is a really beautiful specimen of the ladies' typography. But these printing-offices are the least of their establishments. There are 120 middle-class women carrying on the business of a large highly-organised telegraph office in Moorgate-street, under the admirable management of Mrs. Craig; there is a School of Art with 80 women pupils in Gower-street; there is a School of Design with 100 women at work at Brompton. Miss Rye herself has established a Law Copying Office in Lincoln's Inn, where several young women are honourably earning from 15s. to 30s. a-week. It is astonishing to see the fine, clear, lawyer's hand which these fair copyists have acquired by a little practice. Several of the young ladies, too, are studying medicine, and are determined to practise the "healing art." Others are employed in the British Museum deciphering old manuscripts, and one of them, a Mrs. Green, is getting £300 a-year for her work. There are many other ways in which these noble young creatures are seeking to

win their share of the higher and more remunerative kinds of employment, and if woman ever approaches the angelic character in this life, surely it is in that sphere of self-imposed and intelligent exertion.

Miss Parkes edits the *Englishwoman's Magazine*, a monthly publication, printed and managed entirely by women. Among other means of relieving their sisterhood, they have hit upon emigration, and I believe several young women have already arrived at Sydney under the auspices of Miss Rye and her friends.

We have been appalled by a frightful and unprecedented colliery accident, the details of which will be found at great length in the papers. By a sudden accident 215 men and boys were shut up in a coal-pit, without light, without food, and in a poisonous atmosphere, for a whole week, before they could be disinterred. Oh! the wailing and weeping of the doomed women and children above that living grave, throughout those bitter winter nights. The awful result is best told in the decisive sentences of the Electric Telegraph.

LONDON, Jan. 24, 1862.

LETTER V.

RUMOURED ABDICATION — OPENING OF PARLIAMENT — THE HOUSE OF COMMONS — MR. DISRAELI — MR. GOLDWIN SMITH — GOSSIP.

A RUMOUR is circulating among men who repeat nothing lightly, that England is soon to have a king. Albert Edward is now in the East completing his princely education by a course of travel in the lands of classical and sacred story. He will return, it is said, on the attainment of his majority, to ascend the throne abdicated by the sorrowing Queen. The great grief that has fallen upon Queen Victoria would naturally incline her to seek retirement; and the latest voice from the Royal seclusion tells us that every day her grief grows deeper. It may be that the rumour of abdication is traceable to what is known of this womanly grief, and what is surmised of the forms in which, if it could find no relief, it would

seek a melancholy indulgence. It were beautiful to see the idolised Queen, who in her royal prosperity had so long rested on the virtues of that noble Prince, now dedicating herself to his memory and to his unfinished works of goodness. Her people might not be blamed if they had imagined this life-fixed cast to Victoria's sorrow. But I fear the rumour will be found to ripen into fact, and that the reign of Albert Edward will commence with another year.

The meeting of Parliament was a gloomy ceremony. That clear silver voice which used to speak from the throne, enchanting all listeners, was absent, and, as every heart felt, stifled by an impenetrable and unavailing gloom. The attendance of Lords was very small, and the few ladies in the galleries sat like icy effigies amidst the gorgeousness that blazed from the walls and ceiling of the Peers' Chamber. The muster in the Commons was much more numerous, though few of the stars vouchsafed to shine on the first gathering. The formal figure of Mr. Edward Baines was one of the first to invade the solitude of the empty benches, and Lord Hotham, in ancient habiliments, and with a James Macarthur-

like step, was conspicuous in his wanderings about the corridors. The Irish members appeared in goodly number, including the haggard visage of Mr. Maguire, and the slim boyish form of the O'Connor Don. When Mr. Speaker was announced the House was about half full. With stately step, and a gentle stooping in his shoulders, the Right Honorable gentleman came, a few minutes before two o'clock, followed by his chaplain and the other officers. "The Speaker is at prayers!" A little commotion of tongues and feet outside, and the Black Rod is announced.

All this time your humble correspondent was continually waiting in the grand corridor leading from the Commons to the Lords, which, however, is by far the best place for the curious spectator at this stage of the proceedings. An accomplished baronet, a member of the Lower House, had me in charge, together with an Italian refugee. Both of us wanted to get places in the Lords to hear the Speech read, but we did not want to leave the present point of observation a minute too soon. A few minutes, and Black Rod returned, with the "faithful Commons" in a straggling crowd at his back. There was no time to be lost. I

looked as much like a Commoner as some of that heterogeneous crowd ; so it was suggested by one of themselves ; and in I went right in the thick of the "collective wisdom" of the nation, to the bar of the Lords. I felt over-wise for the rest of the day, and could hardly conceive myself less a character than Mr. Hadfield, or Mr. Vincent Scully, till I woke up to all the realities of a London fog the next morning.

The House of Commons, on its return, adjourned till four o'clock. I had secured a seat in the Speaker's Gallery for its re-assembling. After some preliminary business, such as giving notices of motion, and the chair announcing the return of new members, Lord Palmerston came into the House, about twenty minutes past four o'clock, and was greeted with considerable cheering from the Ministerial benches. The mover of the address, Mr. Portman, who appeared in his volunteer uniform, went through the various topics of the royal speech with fluency and collectedness, and in a neat and unpretending style ; and the House encouragingly cheered his tact and business-like manner. When he sat down, Lord Palmerston rose, and leaning over the back of the seat, shook

him warmly by the hand. The new member for the city of London, who seconded the address, was heaviness itself, and the tolerant House signified its sense of weariness for some time by a sullen silence, which at length broke into a low whisper; and the feeling of relief was manifest when Mr. Western Wood resumed his seat. Instantly rose Mr. Disraeli. The Conservative leader at once plunged into the chief political subject of the Speech—the recent misunderstanding with America; and though the Right Honorable gentleman said nothing, and really had nothing to say, no man could have contrived to say nothing with more adroitness or more show of profundity. With respect to the course pursued by the Government, his office was to speak the approval of his party, and he spoke it well. He believed the wise policy of non-interference had been “sincerely adopted and sincerely practised.” Mr. Disraeli then cast about for some reasonable ground for fault-finding, and he hit upon the Morocco loan; but one might better appreciate the tone than the substance of his objections. There was no show of bitterness in what he said, nothing to remind you of the tormentor of the great Peel. With faltering

voice he passed on to the great sorrow of the nation, and, as he took up his new subject, the true orator appeared. His voice scarcely rose above a mournful whisper—so tremulous with feeling and yet so clear, and his words were of the simplest and fittest, as he spoke of the true worth of the departed Prince, and of the immeasurable greatness of the nation's loss. Every breath communicated its pathetic tones to every heart among his listeners, as he recounted the many virtues that survived to perpetuate the memory of the dead ; and when he had concluded with a soul-touching allusion to the grief of the Queen, one felt that the strain of eloquence which had just ceased was of that order which could never be given to others in written words.

In manner and bearing there is some personal likeness between Mr. Disraeli and an Australian statesman—Mr. Gavan Duffy, and when I remarked this to a friend of Mr. Duffy's, I was told that the resemblance had often been noticed. In complexion and features they are very unlike. I was struck by a much more vigorous appearance in the Conservative leader of the Commons than I expected to see. His face looked full, and

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I should judge him capable of much hard work and endurance. I have seen Mr. Disraeli on several subsequent occasions, and his habits of attendance in his place and attention to all that passes do not appear to have been overstated by his biographers.

Of course Lord Palmerston followed Mr. Disraeli. Your Mr. Cowper* might have said all that the Prime Minister of England said, and said it with quite as much oratorical effect. But there was this difference between Lord Palmerston's common-places and Mr. Cowper's: the old English minister knew exactly the limits within which he must confine himself, and seemed perfectly to know the temper of his audience and the state of public feeling outside. In the personal aspect of Lord Palmerston there is a strange incongruity of vigour and infirmity. Standing at the table, he looks fresh and hale; but there is a visible tottering in his step as he walks along the floor, and the way in which he seeks repose as he sits seems to be more forced upon him by exhausted nature than by parliamentary habit.

Amidst a little storm of impatient "ohs!" Mr.

* The Head of the Ministry in New South Wales at that time.

Hadfield, the junior Member for Sheffield, now rose to express what had been already well expressed, and what he did not know how to express at all. For some six or eight minutes he blundered on, amidst all manner of signs of disapprobation. Yet I must say the House of Commons is entitled to rank among its chief virtues its tolerance of bores, notwithstanding what has been so often written of its disposition to cough and crow men down. It is scarcely possible to conceive a greater and more pretentious dunce than Sir Robert Peel, and yet the House, from some whim or other, will lustily cheer the Right Honorable baronet, even when he utters the most errant balderdash. Is it that the collective fancy is tickled by the contrast between him and the great minister who freed the people's bread? Speaking of Sir Robert, he got into a pretty scrape the other night with the O'Donoghue, and, in spite of the prejudices against the disloyal Irishman, I think the Chief Secretary came off second best.

After Mr. Hadfield, Mr. Maguire started up with the burden of Irish grievances, and a reply from Chief Secretary Peel was followed by the scrannel eloquence of Mr. Vincent Scully. And

so the House of Commons rose after its first day's sitting in 1862.

Dr. Lang has received a powerful advocate of his theory of Australian independence in no less a personage than the popular Oxford professor, Mr. Goldwin Smith. In the latter end of January a letter from Professor Smith appeared in the *Daily News*, boldly advocating the absolute emancipation of all the colonies of England. The *Times* took up the subject in a leader extending over two columns, but utterly failed, as every candid reader must admit, to meet the Professor's arguments. Several other journals have entered with more or less freedom into the discussion. A few days ago Mr. Smith replied in a letter of striking ability, in which he scornfully says that the *Times'* article "contained not a single relevant argument or fact of any description," and in which the whole question is argued with closer reason and more lucid statement.

Mr. Goldwin Smith is a very important man, and has, perhaps, a larger following of young minds than any man at Oxford or Cambridge. His bold adherence to colonial emancipation cannot be treated lightly.

The annual dinner of Australians in London, to commemorate the foundation of the colony of New South Wales (for that really is the event which the boastful Victorians and others celebrate at these gatherings) took place in the great hall of the Freemasons' Tavern, on the evening of the 12th instant. The chairman for the occasion was Sir James Palmer, and the vice-chairman at the New South Wales table was Sir Daniel Cooper. The Duke of Newcastle, Lord Stanley, Sir John Pakington, and Lord Clarence Paget were among the guests of the evening. Mr. Gladstone was to have been present, but was unfortunately kept away by a family bereavement. As a public dinner, the thing passed off well, but the speaking was very indifferent. I noticed that your colony was but poorly represented, except by men retired from official position, such as Sir John Dickinson and Mr. Therry. Mr. John Croft, Mr. John Alger, and one or two others connected with your trading circles, were all that I observed at the tables.

Sir John Dickinson, I am told, has some thoughts of returning to the colony, and regrets that he resigned his seat on the Bench. Among the accessions to your bar, you will receive in the course

of the year two young Australians of some promise, Mr. Innes, son of Captain Long Innes, and Mr. Alexander Oliver. I have also heard that a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, of considerable eminence as a writer on equity law, has some thoughts of emigrating to Sydney.

The friends of Dr. Lang will be delighted to hear that he has completely succeeded in his appeal to the Privy Council. Yesterday Lord Kingsdown gave judgment, reversing the decision of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, and giving costs in both Courts against Mr. Purves and his friends.

Sir Daniel Cooper has addressed a long letter to the Duke of Newcastle, calling the attention of the English Government to the superior qualities of Australian coal. The letter is one of considerable ability.

A letter has appeared in the *Times* from Mr. David Buchanan, defending colonial democracy. The only point in Mr. Buchanan's letter is unfortunately a misstatement of facts, namely, that the public officers who retired on political grounds under the Constitution Act voted for their own pensions, and it has been answered (as it was sure

to be by somebody in London) by Mr. James Macarthur, shewing that the Member for Morpeth is either ignorant of the most patent facts of our recent history, or indifferent to the truth. It is unfortunate that such an advocate should have appeared in such a place at such a juncture.

LONDON, *Feb.* 26, 1862.

LETTER VI.

THE REPUTATION OF THE COLONY IN ENGLAND
— AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS IN THE HOUSE
OF COMMONS — BRITISH CONNEXION — THE
LONDON POOR.

NOTWITHSTANDING all that has been said against our dear old colony, the accounts from Sydney place her, in the estimation of observant men here, first of the Australian group in the elements of solid prosperity. If political mistakes have been made, they know that worse mistakes have been made nearer home, and in the midst of it all they see that the colony is making real progress. The two millions which it appears Mr. Cowper wants to borrow will be readily obtained, and the alarm about Australian democracy is beginning to lose its potency to English ears. Englishmen at home believe in the English stock abroad, and there must be

some worse fruits than any yet from the working of manhood suffrage to shake this belief. Among the public men of England the desire is to let the colonies govern themselves more—not less.

The English papers, so far as they reflect the opinions of conspicuous men in Parliament and directing minds in literature (and the English masses never think about the matter at all), will have informed you that events are tending towards the withdrawal of all Imperial military aid from the Australian colonies. Two set debates on the subject have occupied the Commons (that is, a miserably thin minority of the House) during the past month, besides the incidental sallies of honorable members in the same direction. The originators of these debates were, in the first instance, Mr. Arthur Mills, the member for Taunton, who, before he entered Parliament, had paid a good deal of attention to colonial matters, and had published a book on Colonial Constitutions; and in the second instance, Mr. W. E. Baxter, the successor of Joseph Hume in the representation of Montrose. I am not sure that there is not more of English popularity-seeking than of anything else in these efforts on the part of certain

politicians, and I am inclined to this opinion from the incompleteness and vagueness of the views expressed even by such men as Mr. Adderley. They want to withdraw the military, but they are wonderfully tender on the point of being suspected of a wish to weaken the ties of British connexion; and, when embarrassed by the logical sequence of their own arguments, they at once except all the ground on which the colonists base their claim to military protection. If the colonists are involved in the quarrels of England, forsooth, they would rush to the defence of the colonies! The truth is, I suspect that these gentlemen, in the dearth of popular topics, have discovered that it tickles the English voter's idea of his pocket to be told how he ought not to be taxed for the defence of the saucy and well-conditioned colonists. There is another class of politicians, however, who are much more in earnest, and possess much more ability, and exercise a much wider range of influence. They would withdraw the military, as they would remove the last hold of British power from the colonies, under the firm belief that the present connexion is only mischievous in its effects, and that it would be

juster to the people of the British isles, and far more conducive to the general progress of the colonies, to have a complete separation. There are leading men in both Houses of Parliament, and certainly on both sides of the Commons, who are ready to go the whole length, and Professor Goldwin Smith, who on account of his popularity can afford to say what he thinks, is only a little bolder than other men with names and followings at the Universities, while the *Times*, ever splendid in its inconsistencies, has startled the elderly gentlemen in nightcaps, by putting forth as a reason for the withdrawal of the military, that in the event of any of the colonies claiming their independence, England ought not to risk the shedding of blood by having troops on the spot, whose duty it would be to fight!

I was sitting under the gallery when Mr. Mills' motion came on in the House of Commons. The benches on both sides were well filled, and the mover, who is a gentlemanly young man, with clear powers of statement and an evident knowledge of his audience, was endured to the end of his speech without any sensible decrease of members, and whenever he said a pointed thing

about the injustice of taxing their constituents for the benefit of the self-governing colonies, honorable gentlemen lustily cheered him. After the first dose, a good deal of uneasiness was manifested; one by one, and two by two, the seats began to thin, and in the next quarter of an hour a hundred members had escaped.

The resolution of Mr. Mills affirmed that those colonies exercising the right of self-government ought to take upon themselves the main responsibility of providing for their own internal good order and security. After a speech from the seconder, Mr. Buxton, in support, an addition to the motion was moved by Mr. Baxter "That such colonies ought to assist in their own external defence." Mr. Fortescue, the Under Secretary for the Colonies, assented on behalf of the Government to both the resolution and the amendment, and made a speech expressive of his concurrence in much that had been advanced, but doubting whether a general principle could be applied in all cases, especially in those colonies where the population was of mixed character, such, for example, as Trinidad. Sir James Ferguson, who had been a member of Mr. Mills' committee of last

session on Colonial Defences, took the doubting side of the argument more decisively ; he thought it might be safely inferred that Mr. Baxter contemplated by his amendment a much wider question than was opened by Mr. Mills. But the House was getting noisily impatient, and evidently wished the Colonial economists at the antipodes. Mr. Adderley, however, with his bundle of papers beside him, was sitting in a fidgetty enough condition on the front Opposition bench, which he had all to himself ; even the never-inattentive Disraeli had gone to get his chop and half-pint of port ; and the Conservative plalanx at the rear consisted of Sam Slick and two other heavy-looking old gentlemen. At length Ferguson sat down, and Haliburton jumped up ! Of course I was all ears to learn what the author of "Sam Slick," with his Nova Scotian instincts, had to say on the subject ; and he said just nothing to the purpose, and that nothing in as uninteresting a way as any other old gentleman with a portly figure and well-used countenance could well adopt. As I had nothing better to do, and as the task was an easy one, I "counted the House" while Mr. Haliburton was speaking, and the number of

members present was twenty-seven ! Two or three junior members of the Government kept possession of the Treasury benches, and some four or five forlorn figures sat at easy distances on the back ministerial seats, conspicuous amongst whom was the stout form of Mr. Childers. Here and there in other parts of the House, sat solitary members, as if doing penance for their political sins. But all the notabilities, including the veteran Premier, had vanished. Mr. Gladstone had sat out part of the debate ; so had Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Bright had shewed himself at the door once or twice, but had speedily disappeared again. The sight of the empty benches seemed to freeze Mr. Ad-derley's tongue to the roof of his mouth. He had not power to touch his notes when the Speaker rose to put the question from the chair ; and it was put as amended by Mr. Baxter in a house of three-fourths of a quorum, and passed in the affirmative. Five minutes after, Mr. Locke King moved the second reading of his Register of Voters' Bill, and the House thereupon was counted out. The process of "counting out" is very different from that of the New South Wales Assembly, and certainly much more sensible.

When Mr. Locke King moved, a member on the opposite benches forewarned him that if he persisted in so thin a House, *he would count him out*. Mr. King offered terms which did not meet the views of the objector, who explained that he did not wish to take advantage of the state of the House, if the second reading was postponed to a certain day. This not being assented to, he then *moved that the House be counted*. All this time the Speaker sat perfectly silent, listening to the two members trying to make terms, and he did not count till he was *moved* thereto. This is so very different to the Colonial practice, and is so much more in favour of the good order of public business, that perhaps your Parliamentarians may think it worth while to refer to the reports of what occurred, which will be found in the London papers of March 5, though those reports do not explain the occurrence in detail.

Mr. Baxter, on the 21st instant, submitted the following resolution :—

“That the multiplication of fortified places in distant possessions involves a useless expenditure, and that the cost of maintaining fortifications at places not being great naval stations, in self-governed colonies, is not a proper charge on the Imperial Treasury.”

The debate was valuable only in giving occasion for a very sensible speech from Sir George Cornwall Lewis on the whole subject, which left the Member for Montrose with no alternative but to withdraw his motion.

Out of Parliament there is little domestic matter of interest, and Parliament itself is unusually dull. The most spirited debate took place a few days back, when the general subject of international maritime law was brought forward by Mr. Horsfall. The House of Commons is just now in the thick of a thorough discussion of the Revised Code of Education.

The Exhibition building is completed, and the interior arrangements are being rapidly carried out. The *Vimiera*, with the New South Wales contributions, arrived in the Thames yesterday.

The subject of the condition of the London poor has just been brought before the public by an unexampled act of munificence on the part of a citizen of the much-abused United States. No one who has not walked with his eyes and his heart open through the obscure and narrow passages of life in this huge human hive can form any adequate idea of the multifarious forms of wretch-

edness which are to be seen day and night, summer and winter, amidst the opulence and refinement, the glitter and joyousness of London. There are throngs of little children who have been trained into professional wickedness. An "Australian" writes in the *Times* :—

"To the Editor of the Times.

"SIR,

"On this bitter cold and wet morning, as I was coming to the City, my attention was attracted to a little girl, seven or eight years of age, crying bitterly. She was as fair and beautiful a child as could well be seen. Her garments were miserably thin, and her poor little feet had scarce any covering, as she dragged herself along on the cold pavement. Before I accosted her I watched her for a minute or two. She did not ask anyone for alms. The crowd passed on, no one took notice of her, and the policeman of the beat, with stern look and erect step, was unconscious of her existence. I then asked her what she was crying for, and whether she had no friends to look after her. The poor little thing could only say, 'I'm so cold,' and that she had no parents alive. Of course I gave the child a trifle, and begged the policeman to see what could be done for her; but he could do nothing, and pointed in other directions where more children were crouching in passages to get out of the cold blast.

"I do not address these few lines to you acting under any feelings of sickly sentimentality. I have been away from England many years, and, probably, this first instance which has come under my notice of the suffering to which many children of the poorer classes are subjected has struck me with a greater degree of acute sympathy than those feel who, day by day and year by year, witness similar scenes. Suffering and poverty there always will be; but it is nevertheless very shocking that in this rich city there appears

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to be no philanthropic machinery in existence which would extend a helping hand to such a little innocent ; which would save from perishing from cold and misery this lovely specimen of God's creation. Tens of thousands of pounds are spent yearly by this country in sending missions to the heathen : cannot a little money be spared to pick up in the streets and care for these little girls ; and if they cannot be provided for in this overpopulated country, send them in due time, under proper care, to those countries, like Australia, where they would in time become prosperous and happy mothers of families ?

“If I remain long in England, I may perhaps become as callous to such sights as the callous crowd whom I saw passing by this poor infant without a word or look of commiseration. I am myself a father, and I am not ashamed to say I was unmanned by the sight. It is the happy privilege of your great journal that its columns are read by untold thousands. I beseech you, therefore, to give insertion to these few lines. No one can tell but some parents' hearts in influential and wealthy circles may have their attention drawn to this subject by their perusal, and that some good may result from it.

“I remain, Sir,

“Your obedient Servant,

“AUSTRALIAN.”

March 21.

Every man in London might find occasion, every day and every hour of the day, to write like this “Australian,” if he gave way to the impulses of his better nature. The next day's *Times* brings an answer from one who knows the lower depths of London better than he, and whose charity is not colder nor narrower.

"To the Editor of the Times."

"SIR,

"Your correspondent 'Australian,' on his way to the City yesterday, sees a pretty little girl, miserably clad and shoeless, crying in the street, and no man regarding her. The day is bitter, and he is touched. He asks her why she cries, and whether she has no friends. She replies that she is 'so cold,' and that she has no parents alive. He then gives her 'a trifle,' and, after commending her to the humane consideration of a policeman, proceeds on his way, moralising and wondering 'why, in this rich city, there appears to be no philanthropic machinery in existence which would extend a helping hand to such a little innocent.'

"Now, sir, as 'Australian' represents a large class of the benevolent public, will you permit me to point out to him that the 'philanthropic machinery' in this case should have been found in his own person?

"Why, if so much interested in this poor child, did he not write her name and address, or the place she slept in the previous night, in his pocket-book? It would not have taken so long as writing his letter to the *Times* did, and he would have had the opportunity, either in person or by proxy, of helping, possibly rescuing from a future life of fraud and crime, this one innocent, and perhaps others.

"But no; he did precisely the thing he ought not to have done. He gave her 'a trifle.' Did he see what she did with it? His uncommunicative policeman probably did, and smiled grimly as he watched her run round the corner into the adjacent gin-shop, and give it into the hand of the blear-eyed hag who had hired her for the day, and who, with a greater or less blasphemy in proportion to the amount of the contribution, drives her back into the cold to distil more tears of 'unmanned fathers' into gin.

"For 'Australian,' as a stranger, there is every excuse; but, in truth, this most common, mischievous, and selfish mode of administering alms is adopted by a great proportion of the public who ought to know better. The vast commerce, the restless activity

of this human ant's-nest, renders us, not 'callous,' but disposed to condense our charity into the shilling given in the street, or the check sent to the 'Society.'

"The sight alluded to by your correspondent 'unmans' 'Pater-familias' more than other people. But though 'the father' softens, the merchant, the stockbroker 'is fixed,' and must not lose his appointment in the City; and so the half-crown hurriedly bestowed, though imparting a genial glow to the giver, often carries a curse to the receiver, aiding and confirming a course of deceit and crime, helping the pretty face of the child to trade upon the better sympathies of humanity till it is eligible to minister to its grosser vices.

"I remain, Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

W. D. B.

March 22.

So it is. These two simple letters exhibit the cruel thing of London juvenile vagrancy as it exists, the prolific cause of the thing, and its only effectual remedy. God be praised for ragged schools, and for an active benevolence in high places like Lord Shaftesbury's! Let no one think that the pictures they sometimes see of systematised juvenile mendicancy are overdrawn. One Sunday afternoon I was walking with Thomas Carlyle from Chelsea to Grosvenor-square, when, as one nearly always is, I was accosted by a begging child. I gave the child a sixpence, which called forth a rebuke from the stern philosopher at my side. "The other

day I was asked for alms in one of these squares by a poor little weeping girl," said he; "I had a profound conviction that no gift from me could benefit her, but I nevertheless gave her some loose pence. After walking a short distance, I turned to see what she did with herself, when I saw another bigger girl taking the pence from her, and beating her to make her cry for more. It is of no use—it is worse: it is supporting their tyrants to give to these children."

But there is another kind of poor in London, the honest and striving, who, do what they will, through a hundred different causes, cannot earn sufficient bread. These, the deserving children of want and sorrow, have found a noble benefactor in George Peabody. This great-hearted American merchant is a native of Massachusetts. After a long career of commercial success, the last twenty-five years in London, he has amassed a large fortune. Years ago his benevolent spirit found a worthy sphere of exercise in founding two public institutions with free libraries attached to them, for the improvement of the poorer classes in American cities where in early life he had resided. Within the last few days Mr. Peabody

has made over in trust, for the benefit of the honest poor of London, the splendid donation of £150,000 sterling. Think of that, ye rich Australians, whose hearts expand towards the poor !

LONDON, *March* 26, 1862.

LETTER VII.

MR. GLADSTONE — MR. COBDEN — THE IRON-CLAD
'MERRIMAC' — EMIGRATION OF WOMEN — POV-
ERTY AMONG THE PEOPLE.

DURING the Parliamentary recess the spirit of domestic politics seems to have fairly died out ; Mr. Cobden's pamphlet, "The Three Panics," is about the only ripple on the dull quiet sea. Mr. Gladstone's appearance in Lancashire may be regarded more as a personal than a political ovation. The high spotless character of the Chancellor of the Exchequer raises him above most others in the estimation of the English public—from the Throne to the cottage ; and the mercantile and manufacturing classes are justly proud of him, and never lose an opportunity of doing him honour. This was seen with grand effect lately in the House of Commons, when Mr. Disraeli imprudently raised the question of political morality between

himself and the accomplished Finance minister, and the deep-wounding retorts of Mr. Gladstone lighted up the independent seats with electrical cheering. It seemed as if the idea of comparison between the two could not be borne.

Mr. Cobden's letter on the law of blockade will have a deeper effect than his pamphlet; and it is impossible to deny that his positions in the one case are much sounder than in the other, while his conclusions are much more lucidly and forcibly reasoned out. We may safely infer that Mr. Cobden's arguments have given a blow to the present state of the law, which followed up, as all such clearly-directed blows ever are, from other quarters, will have its effect in some early modification of that barbarous practice of war.

The "duel," as it is called, between the two steel-coated ships in America has given a new turn to the war feeling of England. The frightful destruction—equally frightful in its extent and rapidity—which the Merrimac made so long as she had to do only with "wooden walls," and the certainty, now made terribly clear by an actual engagement, that one of these floating iron monsters can sweep a whole wooden fleet from the

sea, has caused a sudden and decided change in all the costlier war preparations. Parliament has unanimously resolved for the speedy building of iron ships, for the steel casing of our wooden frigates, and for the substitution of floating iron castles for fortifications on shore. One is fairly stunned by the inventions for destroying human life, and the horrifying results of civilization which every morning brings forth. Grim geniuses meet one on every side, clamouring for the adoption of their steam rams, and cannon-balls a ton weight, which are to smash everything to eternal ruin, and sweep men away in multitudes. What will become of Fort Denison, or Pinchgut*—which do you call it?—in such blazing times as these!

I mentioned in a former letter something of what is being done by a few benevolent ladies in England to better the condition of the respectable class of poor struggling women. They seem to be coming to the conclusion that emigration is the only way to afford effectual help, and their advisers among influential men and members of the press point in the same direction. British Columbia is the favourite colony at this moment, though

* A small island fortification in Port Jackson.

Queensland and New South Wales are talked of. The Bishop of Oxford, the Rev. Charles Kingsley, and others, are aiding in this interesting work.

You people of Sidney may form some notion of the pressure on these poor young women from the fact that more than 3000 applied to be engaged as waitresses in the refreshment department of the International Exhibition, all producing high testimonials.

The English winter and spring have been singularly mild, which was very fortunate for the thousands who in different parts of the country are suffering destitution little short of death. Little hard pinching weather has been felt, but an unusual quantity of rain has fallen, and there have been some mischievous late frosts, which in many places have destroyed all the wall-fruits and done other injury to the gardens. I travelled through a great part of England the latter end of last month: from Reading to Oxford much of the land on both sides of the Great Western line was flooded, and Oxford itself looked like a city in the midst of a sea; again, from Tamworth to Burton, in many places the farm-houses were surrounded by water, rendering access to them

a work of no little difficulty; and all the low lands along the Trent were in the same predicament. The banks of the Severn in many places were overflowed. The young wheat, however, in all directions looks remarkably promising, and I imagine little harm has been done by the wet season, except engendering low fevers in the hovels of the indigent.

In the hovels of the indigent poor, O, what a soul-sickening world is there! "The misery of the English poor," at this moment, is no hollow cry raised by a morbid humanity. It meets you in palpable shape at every turn, grinding stout earnest men and comely women in the dust. Pass through Lancashire—you see crowds of men with hunger as plain as winter daylight in every countenance—and often poor pallid creatures tottering under the rapid ravages of consumption—the ghastly messenger of relief which comes from want and a damp dwelling. You have a fearful sense of desolation as you gaze on those enormous factories, with their wildernesses of machinery, all silent as the grave. Ten thousand hands in Manchester wholly thrown out of employment. Wigan and Blackburn still more destitute! And

yet these sufferers patiently enduring to the death, without a sign of riot, almost without an audible murmur! The power of endurance and the courage on the battle-field seem to me nothing to this. Nor is Lancashire the only district where extreme suffering is to be seen, the ruin fast engulfing the masters as well as the men. Coventry and the neighbouring towns are struggling against an equal load of distress. These latter towns are, however, struggling with a marvellous resolution. Worn out with waiting for a return of prosperity in their staple trade, but still with hope and patience unexhausted, men are striving to introduce new manufactures. The ribbon loom is employed on novel and ingenious woollen fabrics, elastic band manufactories have been opened, and two large cotton mills have been built. But the period of adversity has not only starved the operative out of their once comfortable homes, but it has absolutely ruined one-half of the employers of three years ago. I lately passed through Coventry, and I collected some statistics from a gentleman than whom few have a better knowledge of the city. During the last three years real property has been depreciated fifty per cent, and

I was told that it is utterly impossible to collect more than one-third nominal rents. At the same time, the owners of property have never done with the tax-collector. The following is a list of the local burdens :—

	s.	d.
Annual poor rate, 5s. in the £.	5	0
District rate, 2s. in the £.	2	0
Watch rate, 6d. in the £.	0	6
Water rate, 6d. in the £.	0	6
Borough rate, 1½d. in the £.	0	1½
Church rate, 7d. in the £.	0	7

Then come the Imperial taxes :—

Property tax, 9d. in the £.	0	9
House tax, 1s. in the £.	1	0
	<u>10</u>	<u>5½</u>

I have not put down the assessed taxes which are levied on horses, dogs, male servants, carriages, armorial bearings, hair powder, and almost every tangible luxury of the rich. But, irrespective of the assessed taxes, and possibly some other burdens I have missed, it will be seen by the above list that the inhabitants of Coventry *who have property* are now paying 10s. 5½d. in the £ in the shape of taxes.

At Nuneaton an over-stout gentleman farmer

stepped into the railway carriage in which I was travelling. An acquaintance in the carriage, after shaking him by the hand, good-humouredly remarked that he was not getting any thinner. "No," said the farmer; "I have just paid £115 for poor rates; if that is not enough to make a man fat, I don't know what is!" Think of a state of things like this, good grumbling Australians, and bless yourselves that you are in a land where labour is, of all things, the thing most valuable.

Let writers and talkers say what they will of the improved condition of the English people, these pictures of blank ruin and despair are to be found all over the kingdom. Three hundred and fifty miles from Coventry I was waiting for a railway train in the valley of the Leven, when I got into conversation with a Scotch labourer. He told me that he and his wife had lived for months past on 4*d.* to 6*d.* a day. I asked him what they lived upon, and the reply was, "meal and sour milk." Did he get no meat, I asked him; "not a bit of meat had passed his lips for more than a month." In the valley of the Leven there are some extensive cotton-printing works.

There was a strange unnatural sorrow in this old man's piteous complaints that his daughters had got married. He said he had three girls, who were married and settled in Glasgow. "When the lasses were at home," he continued, "they earned fine wages at the printing fields; they were a great comfort; but there is little chance for the old people when the lasses get married." What the old man said led me to make inquiries of other people, as I had more than two hours to wait for the train; and I found that this was not a solitary case of hard pinching poverty in that neighbourhood.

I do not know of anything of special interest to Sydney people. I can never make out what becomes of Australian notabilities in England; it is difficult even to hear of them. I suppose they will all be at the Exhibition, but then that will be the very place for them to be utterly lost.

LONDON, *April 25, 1862.*

LETTER VIII.

THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION — THE QUEEN
— PRINCE ARTHUR — ENGLISH POLITICS —
THE TURNING TIDE IN THE AMERICAN WAR.

TO be in London, and not to have been at the International Exhibition, will, I fear, be held at Sydney a reflection on the intelligence of your correspondent. As truth is a precious thing, however, in this nineteenth century, especially in a confession that narrows the range of one's knowledge, I must frankly acknowledge I have not yet seen what so many Australian colonists have come so far to see. In what degree this is to be attributed to a perverseness of nature—for I never was fond of running with the stream—it would not, perhaps, be safe for me to say. When the wonderment of the Japanese ambassadors and the Honorables from the Antipodes is over, I may go and see the glories which

the genius and skill of mankind have garnered up for everybody at South Kensington, and which will lose none of their lustre by being left till the illustrious have passed on. In the meantime you will be amply supplied with descriptions of the Exhibition. In England we have these descriptions morning after morning till the mind is appalled by the frightful capacity of the writers. Nevertheless, I much fear the Exhibition will prove a signal failure in attracting visitors in numbers corresponding to the magnitude of the preparations of Art and Science. On arriving in London lately, I was surprised to find so little change in the public thoroughfares; a few more Frenchmen was all that was noticeable in the street crowds, and those neat little pasteboard indicators, which in every alternate window invite you to "furnished apartments," were as plentiful as ever.

It was a sorrowful thing to see the Royal widow of him who took such pride in this Exhibition, rushing away in her grief to the farthest spot at her command from its inaugural ceremonies. I was at Stafford on the 30th of April, and had occasion to leave by the night mail. The new

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station at Stafford is, I believe, the finest "roadside station" in England, and when I arrived, about eleven o'clock, the spacious platforms, usually all life and commotion, had a strange appearance of quiet and caution. Railway porters were standing at intervals, with lanterns and all the attachés of the station, the clerks from the ticket-office, and the young waitresses from the refreshment-rooms, were looking on in evident expectation of some event, though no one seemed to speak, and everybody looked sad at heart. There were not half-a-dozen other persons in the great station: I was only admitted on explaining that I wished to go by the mail train. All at once I recollected that Queen Victoria was to pass through Stafford that night, on her way to her Highland home, and in a minute after the pilot engine, twenty minutes in advance of the royal train, hurried past. Still those midnight gazers kept their places, with silent lips and fixed eyes, till at the given time the royal carriages also hurried past. Then all walked silently away.

The train in which the Queen travelled consisted of seven or eight carriages. I should think the speed was about thirty-five miles an hour.

The distance from Windsor to Balmoral is nearly six hundred miles. The carriages, as we learn from the newspapers, were fitted up with beds and every convenience for the comfort of the travellers.

It may be interesting to some of your readers to hear of another Royal traveller to Balmoral. Two days ago I was leaving Bristol by the Midland railway, when a rumour reached the passengers that Prince Arthur was to be their fellow-traveller. In a few minutes a fine little boy, in a plain round jacket and cap, stepped smartly along the platform accompanied by three or four gentlemen, and took his seat in a saloon carriage in the centre of the train. I suppose the telegraph spread the news, for when we got to Berkeley a little crowd of country people were straining their eyes to catch a sight of the Prince, and the instant the train stopped at Gloucester fifty or sixty people surrounded his carriage.

I had to leave the train at Gloucester, so I pushed in among the rest to see Prince Arthur. The side of the carriage being principally plate glass, he could be well seen. His only companion was a gentleman, who appeared intent upon a

book from which he never raised his eyes. The young Prince sat on the far side, and kept constantly leaning forward and raising his head as if to see the most of that portion of his mother's free subjects who unceremoniously stared at him. He seemed to think there was some fun in it, and could hardly restrain himself from laughing at times. He does not look older than he is—twelve years; he has brown hair, fair complexion, and large restless eyes. After all, as one good old lady observed, "he is very much like other little boys."

In the political world the champion Disraeli is buckling on his armour. Twice recently he has bitterly assailed Mr. Gladstone's management of the finances, and has cleverly struck upon the sympathies of the Parliamentary economists by declaring against a war expenditure in the time of peace. Lord Palmerston's Government exists by a support in the House of Commons which may crumble away at any moment. The financial reformers and radicals who sit below the Ministerial gangway are all in a state of disaffection, the Irish members for the most part are savagely hostile, while a party of men sit round Mr. Disraeli, per-

haps the most compact of any in Parliament by their political sympathies and social intercourse. The rope of opposition is a strong one, but it is badly twisted, and the weakness of the third strand is notoriously the personal dislike of the men for their chief. Still less is Mr. Disraeli in favour with the other malcontents, and it is the difficulty of reconciling with conscience any step that would accelerate his accession to power which often constrains their unwilling votes for the Government. But a change is coming, and Benjamin Disraeli, in spite of personal dislikes, will again be the acknowledged leader of the men of great families in the House of Commons.

The opponents of Church-rates have lost their cause for the session in the House of Commons by one vote. The *Morning Star* argues that the defeat is to be ascribed to the citizens of London, who elected Mr. Western Wood, an avowed supporter of church-rates, in the place of Lord John Russell, a convert to their abolition. But the truth is rather to be found in the low ebb of the political life-current when public men live in daily distrust of their own opinions and are facile in finding excuses for neglect of duty.

It is useless to attempt disguising the fact, the great bulk of the English nation cares nothing about politics in the abstract, or what is called political principle. The Nonconformist party are sincere enough in their opposition to church-rates; the extreme free-traders are undeniably in earnest in their projects of public economy and commercial freedom; other men have their hobbies, which they ride with enthusiasm. But both the people out of doors and members of Parliament evince something like the dying-out of the inflexibility and the strong fire of past times. It is not a dying-out, however, as will be seen some of these days.

The feeling on the civil war in America is not the least perplexing manifestation of these times. So long as victory attended the rebellious slave-holders, sympathy for their cause was too active to be concealed amongst certain classes here, as well among the new families who have risen to social position by trade, as among the old Conservative proprietors. Some would argue the question in a thin disguise; the republic was too large and unwieldy for one state; the natural divisions of the country, and the distinctive cha-

racters of North and South marked them out to be separated. Others would tell you outright that the insolence of the Yankees ought to be curbed, and the offences committed in a special manner by the Southerners would be sure to be all fathered on the Northerners. But now the old North has gathered up her strength, and is advancing upon the rebels with crushing steps. Never in the history of the world was called forth in so short a time an army so powerful and so highly organised, under generals so brave and so skilful, as that which is now fast replanting the flag of the Republic in the rebel States. Still the one-sided haters of democracy in England, who could see such martial splendour in the first successes of the South, can discover nothing great in the men who, with such noble firmness and such glorious self-sacrifice, are successfully defending the Constitution handed down to them by Washington. The failure of democracy proved by this terrible civil war! Why, it has proved, as only such a tremendous crisis could prove, the vital strength of democratic institutions. What monarchy ever rose up from the lap of Peace to

confront so monstrous a disorder, and to suppress it with so strong a hand and with such patriotic unanimity?

LONDON, *May 24, 1862.*

LETTER IX.

THE EXHIBITION — PARTY CONFLICT IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS — LORD BROUGHAM AND
THE SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION.

THE Great Exhibition is beginning to attract a world of strangers in London ; the increase of life and bustle everywhere is very noticeable. Foreign faces and strange costumes meet you in every street and at every assembly ; cabs are in general commotion ; the inland railway lines converging on town are alive with excursionists ; the express trains from the great seaports come twisting round the curves like enormous centipedes. The state of things is wonderfully changed from last month. For the last two or three weeks the daily number of visitors at the Exhibition has ranged over 50,000, and very often 35,000 persons are present together. The Australian courts are attracting much notice, as they deserve to do ;

for the display of products from your remote part of the world is sufficiently imposing to arrest attention independently of all considerations of the youth of the colonies. I am glad to say that New South Wales vindicates her position as the eldest of the Australian contributors by her well-arranged and beautifully varied collection of products.

The political world is in a state of dull perplexity, with little interest in any question among the masses of the people. In the House of Commons there has been some rather hot-tempered debating about the public expenditure, and the radical economists and the philosophical conservatives appear to be working to the same end without any basis of a common understanding. We find Mr. Bright cheering and the *Morning Star* praising the financial views of Mr. Disraeli and Sir Stafford Northcote. The 3rd of this month was fixed for a decisive attack on Lord Palmerston's Government, the state of the finances being selected for the battle-field. Mr. Stansfeld—a young member who made a position for himself during last session by one or two happy speeches—had a motion on the paper affirming

the necessity for retrenchment. Upon this, amendments were proposed from all quarters—by Mr. Bernal Osborne, Lord Robert Montagu, Mr. Horsman, Mr. Walpole, and Lord Palmerston himself; the last being declared by the newspapers nothing less than a vote of confidence in the noble Viscount's own administration. The crisis was considered so imminent that Lord Derby summoned a meeting of his followers, which was numerously attended; and loud and feverish were the presageful utterances of the party journals, and great was the rush to Westminster Palace on the eventful night. But the everlasting Pam was equal to the occasion, and with the vigour of fourscore years spent in diplomacy he seized the bull by the horns at once, and nearly sent the breath out of poor Mr. Walpole's body with the first thrust of his redoubtable arm. The Walpole amendment had been adopted with "loud cheers" at the meeting of the Derbyites; and, without waiting for Mr. Stansfeld to make his motion, the astute old Premier started up and declared, to the amazement of everybody, that he accepted the Conservative move as a challenge of party strength; he was prepared for the issue, and he

hinted intelligibly enough that he was prepared to refer it for final trial to the constituencies. The effect was a childish confusion and terror. Mr. Walpole wouldn't move at all. Mr. Disraeli castigated Mr. Walpole's want of pluck, and Sir W. Heathcote reproved Mr. Disraeli. Lord Palmerston, when he rose in the futile debate that followed, indulged in a characteristic sally of cruel jokes, declared that Mr. Stansfeld had made an excellent speech against his own motion, and assured the House that his Government had no notion of "swallowing the leek" which had been so kindly prepared for them. And then the House of Commons, which was going to put a check on the extravagant waste of the people's money, whatever might be the consequence, threw out Mr. Stansfeld's motion by 367 to 65. Mr. Disraeli's speech in this debate was a masterly charge of financial mismanagement against the Government, which fully sustained his great powers as a debater, and which has not yet been met. How far the orator's advocacy of retrenchment has been stimulated by a desire of office is another matter, which people must decide for themselves.

One gets reconciled in a measure to the useless talk and little time-serving expedients of our Colonial Parliament, after viewing precisely the same kind of impulsiveness and inconsistency in the proceedings of the House of Commons. At least, we feel a sort of relief in finding that human littleness is not peculiar to Australian politicians.

Among other centres of attraction in London lately, the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science has been holding its annual meetings. The inaugural address was delivered on the evening of the 5th, in Exeter Hall, by Lord Brougham. One would have expected the announcement of that name to fill the hall to overflowing, but the spacious room was little more than half full on the occasion. I had never heard Lord Brougham speak, and was very anxious to listen to that voice of the force and vehemence of which I had read such glowing descriptions. Accordingly, I got to Exeter Hall full three-quarters of an hour before the time of meeting, and selected my own position in a line with the chair, and not more than five seats from the platform. It was considerably past the appointed time when the statesman-philosopher made his appearance amidst

a burst of hearty and grateful cheers. He walked along the front of the platform with bowed head and tottering step, never raising his eyes, and he took his seat with evident difficulty. After some preliminaries he rose, slowly and with a painful effort, and commenced reading his address from manuscript. His voice was so harsh and indistinct that I could not hear one word in three throughout the delivery, and the exertion necessary for this was so severely felt, that he was compelled to resume his seat before many leaves were turned over. In asking for this indulgence he spoke in what appeared to me a tone of mortified pride, and with a manner so confused that the meeting did not instantly comprehend his meaning. When the sad meaning flashed upon them, every person present seemed to join in a burst of assenting, sympathising cheers. But the illustrious Brougham is not the man of iron frame which his admirers have represented him to be, and which it would accord with our feeling of wonder at his prodigious labours in time past to believe him to be. A careful reading of the address he delivered on this occasion will, I fear, lead to the conclusion that his noble intellect is also giving way. Its style

for the most part is coarse and declamatory, while nothing could be more inconsequential than some of its reasonings. The present personal appearance of Lord Brougham is just what it is represented to be in Mr. Mayall's full-length photograph. His white bushy hair looks a little thinner, and the crown of his head is quite bald, which, however, is not seen when he stands erect. A night or two after the Exeter Hall meeting I saw him at a discussion on international law, at Burlington House; he came to the door of the room assigned to this department of the Association, very few persons having arrived at the time; he looked in, then drew back and stood in the door-way; some one coming in mentioned that he was at the door, when Dr. Travers Twiss and M. Garnier Pages went out to him, and he came in and sat down. In the course of the evening M. Garnier Pages delivered an animated speech in favour of the reforms in international law which are now becoming popular; and this called up Lord Brougham to express his admiration of the "extraordinary eloquence" of the French orator, who, he reminded the meeting, was formerly "one of the seven kings of France." On this occasion he

spoke with much energy, but it was only for two or three minutes. On the evening of the 7th the Association and its friends assembled at a grand soirée at the Palace of Westminster. Not only Westminster Hall, but St. Stephen's Hall, the Prince's Chamber, the corridors and galleries connecting the Houses of Parliament, and the House of Commons itself, for the first time in English history, were thrown open to the public gathering. Between 3000 and 4000 persons assembled, and Lord Brougham kept his post with Lord Shaftesbury and others the whole evening to receive the immense throng. I saw him as late as eleven o'clock in conversation with the aged poet, Dean Milman, and notwithstanding the fatigues he had undergone, he looked much fresher than at Exeter Hall.

The Social Science meetings throughout the ensuing week, which were held principally in Guildhall, were well attended. Prison discipline and reformatory institutions were subjects which received much attention, and among the papers read were several by Sir Joshua Jebb and Sir Walter Crofton. Those ladies who have made themselves famous of late years by their labours

to improve the condition of their own sex mustered in strong force, and papers were read from Miss Carpenter, Miss Faithful, Miss Bessie Parkes, Miss Rye, Miss Florence Hill, and others. Coöperative institutions were the subject of lengthy and earnest discussion, in which Lord Brougham, Mr. M. D. Hill, Professor Huber, and other eminent persons took part, all warmly in favour of the coöperators. The meetings were followed by a dinner at the Crystal Palace, and by excursions to the prisons at Chatham, and the well-known reformatory at Redhill.

For some weeks past the weather has been very unsettled. Snow has fallen this month in both Scotland and Wales. One or two days last week were as cold as some days in January.

LONDON, *June 25*, 1862.

LETTER X.

LORD PALMERSTON AND MR. COBDEN — THE
DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE — CONFEDERATE
SYMPATHY IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS —
COMMEMORATION DAY AT OXFORD.

THE present month was ushered in by the marriage of the Princess Alice to Prince Louis of Hesse, the ceremony being strictly private. The royal bride, after a brief sojourn in the Isle of Wight, left England with her husband for her future home, with the prayers of every English household for her happiness.

The quiet of the Parliamentary session has been a little disturbed by a rather sharp encounter between Lord Palmerston and Mr. Cobden, which filled the benches for two or three successive evenings, and furnished food for the newspapers for nearly a week. The Premier, who a few months ago was anxious to confer a baronetcy

on Mr. Cobden for his eminent services to England, now denounced him as one in a "state of blindness and delusion which made him utterly unfit to be listened to by the country as an adviser," and pooh-poohed the French treaty as being mere moonshine in the way of promoting peace, compared to his own dockyards and fortifications. This abuse, however, was not received very cordially by either side of the House, even from Lord Palmerston; and when Mr. Cobden returned to the charge on a subsequent evening, he was greeted with a deafening cheer. The quarrel is, in so many words, this—Mr. Cobden accuses Lord Palmerston of humbugging Parliament into a war expenditure in a time of peace, and when thousands of the people are starving, and that Lord Palmerston retorts upon Mr. Cobden that his peace principles would be dangerous to the honour and security of the country; the old strife between them, which stood in the way of the Free Trade leader accepting a seat in the present Cabinet, even in company with Mr. Gladstone. In this Parliamentary set-to, the author of the French treaty carried with him most unmistakeably the sympathies of the House, though he assuredly

would not have done so, to the same extent, if the attack upon him had been made with a truer appreciation of his great moral weight, and with more tact and prudence. The war spirit in the House of Commons is undeniably predominant.

Parliament is now considering the case of Lancashire, and men of all parties look forward to the state of things there, as autumn and winter advance, with the most serious apprehension. In all the great cotton towns, by far the greater part of the operatives are in a state of forced idleness, without bread and without hope, and the danger of absolute ruin to the small mill-owners and other possessors of property is pressing closer and closer. In Blackburn the poor-rate has mounted up to 18s. in the pound, and it is confessed that parishes can no longer support their "paupers." The case of Blackburn may be taken to shew the rapid increase of that destitution. According to the statistics brought forward the other night by Mr. Villiers, the persons receiving relief in Blackburn in the last week in May were 10,000, but in the last week in June they had increased to 11,500. The bill of the Government is simply to apply the principle of the Poor Law of Queen Elizabeth

in extreme cases, and to enable parishes that are overburdened with their poor to claim relief from the whole of the Union. There seems a difference of opinion as to the policy of this measure, and some argue in favour of a loan to the distressed parishes, on the security of the future rates, to enable them to tide over their difficulties.

At this juncture a good deal of exasperation has been caused by the introduction of a bill for the prevention of night poaching, the principal provision of which would enable the police to search any person suspected of possessing game. The Conservative member for Oxfordshire, Mr. Henley, has vigorously opposed this measure at all its stages, and the other evening Lord Stanley indignantly reminded the House of the great distress in the North, and warned them that there must be a limit to the patience with which it was borne, and asked what would be said if the last act of the House of Commons, before it rose at such a time, was to pass a law for the protection of game.

The House of Commons has devoted a night to the consideration of the civil war in America, but with no result, and a very small display of wisdom.

On the 18th, Mr. W. S. Lindsay brought forward a motion in favour of an immediate offer of mediation, and supported it by a speech that breathed throughout of peaceable intervention. During the day a rumour had been running through London like wildfire, that General M'Clellan was completely routed, and had offered a conditional surrender. The interest attached to the motion on its merits, heightened by that extravagant rumour, sufficed to bring a large crowd of strangers to the House of Commons, so that the police had to keep the doors to the entrance lobby. The Confederate emissary, John Mason, was among the most anxious. He was met at the door by several members, who evidently regarded him with great affection. I thought Mr. Gregory would never let go the old slave-master's hand. I was fortunate, or rather unfortunate enough to get one of the thirty seats under the gallery. I naturally expected to hear a stirring debate, but the speeches on both sides were utterly unworthy of a subject so momentous. Mr. Lindsay, whom I had always regarded as a clever man, made one of the dullest and clumsiest speeches I ever heard. The Earl of Derby came into the Peers' seat, just below

me, while he was speaking, but he couldn't stand it for more than five minutes. As a specimen of Mr. Lindsay, both of his logic and his ingeniousness, he argued laboriously that the North were not fighting to put down slavery; ignoring altogether that, so far as slavery had to do with the quarrel, it was the South who had broken up the Union for the extension and preservation of slavery, and that the North were simply fighting to preserve the constitution. The speakers on his side were Lord Vane Tempest, Mr. Whiteside, and Mr. Gregory. The speakers against the motion were Mr. Taylor (of Leicester) and Mr. W. E. Forster. Lord Palmerston deprecated any decision by the House on the matter, and contended with much spirit that the Government ought to be left free to act in the way which the course of events might point out. The motion was eventually withdrawn.

The House shewed itself in a strange and not very creditable temper during this debate. All the clamour was in favour of the South. Members, lying on their backs, lustily shouted "bosh" during the speeches of Mr. Taylor and Mr. Forster, but the loudest sympathisers evidently shrunk from

the responsibility of coming to a decision, and Lord Palmerston's appeal was gladly responded to. My belief is that, if members had voted in accordance with their feelings, Mr. Lindsay's motion would have been carried by a large majority.

Among that numerous body of thinking Englishmen who are strangers to the Universities, and have had their intellectual struggles for the most part outside the ancient walks of learning, there is a feeling of something like awe in approaching for the first time the classic ground of Oxford or Cambridge. There are the halls from which have issued the philosophers and statesmen whose names illumine the brightest hopes of our national history. There still are being nurtured, with the accumulated lore of all ages, the young minds on which the country is to rest for its future glory. Who may say what giants shall arise from the ranks of those favoured sons of fortune who are there trying their strength of soul in the consecrated fields of science! It was with some such feeling as this that I visited Oxford on the 2nd of this month, to see what could be seen of the bearing of the aristocratic youth of England at the Commemoration. Perhaps I was attracted, too, by

knowing that the occasion was to be rendered remarkable by the bestowal of the honour of D.C.L. on the veteran Premier of England.

Of course I had heard something of the license given to the undergraduates at the Commemoration. I expected and hoped to see an outburst of the young spirit of the country. Nor did I expect to be charmed overmuch with choiceness and delicacy of expression; but I did expect to see some classic turn given to the latest slang—some freshness of wit infused into the dispensations of popular displeasure. I was hardly prepared to see the youthful lords and squires of England behave more mob-like, in the lowest manifestations of mob turbulence, than the so-called mobs of Manchester or Birmingham; and I confess I was mortified to see the order of gods they had set up for their worship. It came upon me with as much bitterness as surprise to find Jefferson Davis an object of idolatry at Oxford.

As I was making my way through the gay crowds that lined the streets to the Sheldonian Theatre, the incessant discord of the high-blooded saturnalia that reigned within burst out upon my vulgar ears. It was unlike any popular shouting

I had ever heard before. More wild and meaningless—more the ebullition of sheer animal spirits. I jostled my way in amidst the crush of black gowns. The ladies were still arriving, but within the next fifteen minutes every seat assigned to them appeared to be filled; and the pink and white and green and orange of their summer dresses made a brave display. Jenny Lind appeared to be the favourite of the gods in the upper gallery. But there were repeated cheers for “the lady in pink,” and “the lady in green,” and, as often as these discriminating calls were made, there were three cheers for “any other lady.” The name of Disraeli brought down a thundering cheer, but Jeff Davis and the Southern States were responded to by a still louder. Here and there in the crowd below some unfortunate visitor could ill conceal amongst the moving trenches the offensive gleam of a white hat; he was at once the object of the most boisterous displeasure. One unhappy barbarian, probably a fresh arrival from Australia, had the audacity to shake his white hat in the teeth of the infuriated young gentlemen. Oh, heavens, what a yell the misguided man brought down! This sort of

amusement, unenlivened by a single sharp piece of banter or a single spark of wit, continued for nearly two hours, and all through the storm of hideous noises there were constant groans for an unpopular pro-proctor of the name of West, who, however, as he shewed himself at one of the doors, was more frequently saluted by the diffusive soubriquet of "Washy." At last, I should think to the relief of everybody, the great doors were thrown open, and the organ pealed forth "God save the Queen," accompanied by a thousand mingling voices, as the Vice-Chancellor, with his little following of red-gowned doctors, marched in. Sir Charles Nicholson was among the doctors. The only persons of distinction that I noticed were Mr. Gladstone and Lord Westbury. The persons to receive the honorary degree of D.C.L. on this occasion were, the Brazilian Minister, Lord Palmerston, Sir Edmund Head, Sir James Outram, Sir Roundell Palmer, Dr. Jeremie, Dr. Thomas Watson, Professor Wheatstone, and Henry Taylor the poet. The names of Palmerston and Outram were enthusiastically and repeatedly cheered, but the others did not appear to be objects of special favour. As the Vice-Chancellor read out the first

name on the list (his Excellency Comm. Francisco Ignacio de Carvalho Moreira) he was interrupted by the aristocratic comment from the gallery, "All that at once!" And the announcement of Henry Taylor's name was followed by the not very complimentary enquiry, "Who is he?" I felt myself somewhat honoured by being permitted to inform a veritable Master of Arts that Henry Taylor was the author of "Philip Van Artevelde."

I think I never saw so glorious-looking a man as Henry Taylor. His head is large and finely formed, with massy silvery hair, a long waving lock in front being quite golden. His forehead is broad and lofty, his eyes full, his cheeks inclining to florid. The lower part of his face is covered by a long flowing beard, which singularly befits his noble countenance beaming with an expression of mingled power and benevolence. General Outram, who appeared to be suffering from pain, wears a dark beard, has bushy eyebrows, and, I scarcely need say, a face highly bronzed. Lord Palmerston looked remarkably hale and well: as he brushed past where I was standing I could not help admiring the animal spirits mantling his cheeks—more like the glow of youth than

the complexion of fourscore years. He was visibly moved by his reception. I saw him later in the day driving through Oxford, in his red gown, and he seemed as hilarious as a boy of fifteen. One negative evidence of the feeling at Oxford ought not to pass unnoticed : Mr. Gladstone, though the University's own member, was not cheered.

It is reported that Garibaldi has set sail with 6000 volunteers to invade the Roman States. If this be true, it will soon be seen whether the subjects of the Pope are loyal, for, if the Romans flock to the standard of Garibaldi, French intervention will hardly avail any longer. The announcement has created great excitement in Paris and London.

LONDON, *July 25, 1862.*

LETTER XI.

RURAL ENGLAND AND THE RAILWAYS.

ONE consequence of railways was expected to be the letting loose into all corners of England such a flood of visitors that the rural seclusion in which our forefathers lived would no longer be found. The pictures of country life must be sought in the poets of a bygone age. Hodge, and his thatched cottage, could never withstand the shrieking engine and the crowded train. The landscape, made up of primitive forms of life, would melt away before the iron road and its rude cutting, unsightly embankment, and gloomy tunnel. And, undeniably, the English railways have produced a wondrous change in the life and manners of the English nation.

But in some respects the English railways have been followed by a more charming state of rural quietude and beauty. They have not opened the

country to the foot as they have opened it to the eye of the traveller. He may see the morning sun gilding the young wheat on the field of Bannockburn, and he may watch the sunset of the same spring day from Cæsar's Tower at Kenilworth. But his step may not so readily intrude upon the repose of many a pleasant hamlet within sight of the flashing train. And many a child of those hamlets grows up regarding the railway train as he regards the squire's house or the squire's coach—a thing with which he has nothing to do, and which it is part of his lot to look upon from a distance. It is, perhaps, several miles to the nearest station, and a journey of several miles which lies out of his yearly round of occupation is a serious undertaking. The chance wayfarers who looked in upon the village from the old turnpike road were more numerous than the "pilgrims of nature" in the great stream of life ever rushing past, who find occasion to diverge from their course between the great centres of life and trade.

Having left England when only two railways were in operation, I returned to my native country with the impression I had carried away, that the beautiful forms of country life would be all defaced

by the iron locomotives. I was undeceived, with a "glad surprise," by the flowers and foliage that coated the embankments and deep cuttings of the London and North-western, on the occasion of my first trip by that line, through the midland counties, on a bright autumn day. A short time afterwards, when travelling by the Midland Railway through Worcestershire, I was delighted to see a family of partridges enjoying the sunshine on the grassy embankment, not in the least disturbed by the whizzing train. Since then I have discovered, by frequent observation, that the wild creatures of the field and copse have made acquaintance with the steam horse as a thing that never meddles with them, however he may shriek and flame, and that they seldom leave their haunts or quicken their pace at his coming. In Cheshire and Shropshire this spring, I have often seen the "timid hare" standing on her hind feet and listening to the train as it rushed past with its hundred passengers. On one occasion I saw several pheasants not twenty yards from the rail, in a field of young wheat, and not one of the birds raised its head from its plunder of the poor farmer. A few miles below Tamworth, in the Trent Valley, a fox made

its burrow, and brought forth a family of cubs, in the railway embankment. The creatures seem to be assured of their safety by seeing those mighty things ever rushing past, and never stopping in their course nor deviating from the given line. The railway team is the same to them as the winds and the lightnings.

But the flowers, the sweet familiar flowers of an English spring! They have seized upon the railways as part of their rightful heritage. In all directions the deep slopes, where the railway spans some valley, are thickly starred with the pale primrose, and the maidenly cowslips nod to the passengers from the brows of the cutting through the gentle hills. In Worcestershire—I think between King's Norton and Bromsgrove—the Midland line runs through a deep cutting, with the rocky side almost perpendicular, and it would be difficult to find a more beautiful picture of cliff variegated with moss, bramble, gorse, and clinging flowers. In Scotland the fir is frequently planted above the railway slopes, and in a few years some of the lines will run through complete spinneys of fir. The lines from Glasgow, down both banks of the Clyde, are everywhere beautiful. As you

travel on one side you see the train on the other, now darting in behind some severed spur of the hills, and now bursting out upon the more even shore, and ever flinging its wreath of white steam behind it, as if waving an adieu to the vessels on the old historical river. The railways do no more than run their fine lines through the rural landscape, making sunny banks for the flowers and shrubs most loved by the English people. Though places which have a name in history are undoubtedly visited by a larger number of strangers than formerly, I am inclined to think there are many nooks and corners of rural England which are more secluded from the world now than when the world's travellers had to journey by the common road. Certainly, these nooks and corners have lost nothing of their rural beauty.

LONDON, *Aug. 24, 1862.*



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